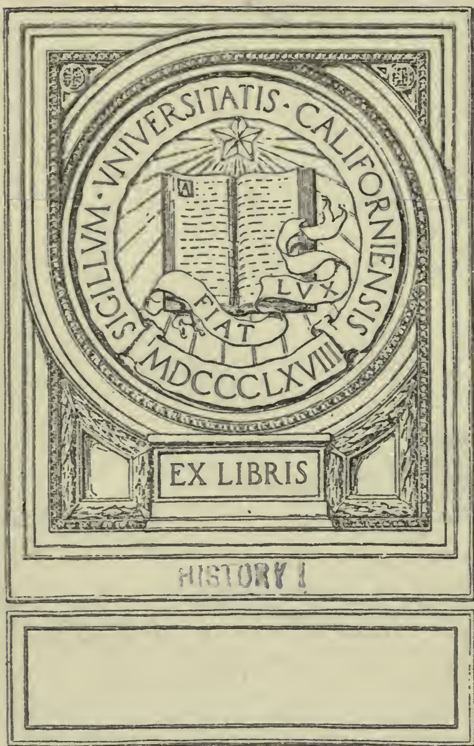

HISTORY I

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CALIFORNIA

MADAME DE MAINTENON

From the painting by E. Petitot

LOUIS XIV

AND

MADAME DE MAINTENON

BY

CHARLOTTE LADY BLENNERHASSETT

"*On veut des romans? Que ne regarde-t-on à l'histoire? Là aussi on trouverait la vie intime avec ses scènes les plus variées et les plus dramatiques, le cœur humain avec ses passions les plus vives et les plus douces et, de plus, un charme souverain: le charme de la réalité.*"—GUIZOT.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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HISTORY

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CONTENTS

CHAP. PAGE

INTRODUCTION ix

I. CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, AND MARRIAGE OF FRANÇOISE D'AUBIGNÉ (1635-1652) 1

II. MADAME SCARRON 14

III. RELIGIOUS REFORM IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 28

IV. MADAME DE MAINTENON 43

V. THE ANONYMOUS QUEEN OF FRANCE 62

VI. VERSAILLES—REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES 78

VII. SAINT-CYR—POPE INNOCENT XI.—THE STUARTS—THE WAR OF THE GRAND ALLIANCE 96

VIII. FÉNELON 117

IX. MADAME DE MAINTENON AND QUIETISM—A RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY 134

X. THE DUC AND DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE . . . 154

XI. THE SPANISH SUCCESSION 176

XII. DEATH OF "MONSIEUR"—FAULTS OF LOUIS XIV.—PHILIP V. IN SPAIN 193

XIII. THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS 204

XIV. MADAME DES URSINS IN SPAIN—BOUFFLERS IN FLANDERS—VILLARS—BLENHEIM—MADAME DES URSINS' RECALL AND TRIUMPH, 1702-1705 215

XV. TURIN, 1706—RAMILLIES—BERWICK AND THE DUC D'ORLÉANS IN SPAIN—THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE IN FLANDERS, 1708—DISGRACE OF THE DUC D'ORLÉANS—THE GREAT WINTER OF 1709 232

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CHAP.		PAGE
XVI.	Failure of Negotiations, 1709—Chamillart's Fall—Malplaquet, 1709—Spain Saved, 1710—Villars at Denain, 1712—Utrecht, 1713—Rastadt and Baden, 1714	249
XVII.	The Harvest of Death at Versailles—The Grand Dauphin, April 1711—The Dauphine, February 1712—The Dauphin Duc de Bourgogne, February 18, 1712—The Duc de Bretagne, March 8, 1712—The Duc de Berry, 1714—The Queen of Spain, 1714—Fall of Madame des Ursins, 1714 .	262
XVIII.	The Last Struggle against Jansenism—The Destruction of Port Royal, 1709—The Bull Unigenitus, 1713	278
XIX.	The End—Louis XIV., September 1, 1715—Madame de Maintenon, April 15, 1719	296
	INDEX	313

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MADAME DE MAINTENON . . . . . *Frontispiece*
From the painting by E. Petitot.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-SIMON . . . . . *Facing p.* xii

PAUL SCARRON, MADAME DE MAINTENON'S FIRST HUSBAND . . . . ,, ,, 12

LOUIS XIV. . . . . ,, ,, 44
From the portrait by Rigaud in the Louvre.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN . . . . . ,, ,, 58

LOUIS XIV. . . . . ,, ,, 74
From the portrait by Rigaud.

BOSSUET . . . . ,, ,, 84
From the portrait by Rigaud.

POPE INNOCENT XI. . . . . . . ,, ,, 94

FÉNELON . . . . ,, ,, 122
From the portrait by Rigaud.

DUC DU MAINE . . . . ,, ,, 154
From the painting at Versailles.

LOUIS, DUC DE BOURGOGNE . . . . . . ,, ,, 164

MADAME DE MAINTENON . . . . . . ,, ,, 170
From the portrait by Mignard.

PHILIP V. OF SPAIN . . . . ,, ,, 182
From the painting by Rigaud.

ELISABETH CHARLOTTE, DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS . ,, ,, 194

religious congregation of Saint-Cyr. Madame de Maintenon's enemy, the Duc de Saint-Simon, agrees with later critics, such as the unrivalled Saint-Beuve, Jules Le Maître, Faguet, and many others, in the high appreciation of their literary value. The style of Madame de Maintenon is unfailingly correct and refined. She writes the best prose of the classic days of French literature. The brilliancy of Madame de Sévigné remains unsurpassed, but Madame de Maintenon is by no means wanting in humour, and her pen is always under the control of her sober, disciplined mind. She adapts herself to the intellectual temper of her correspondents, but she does not sacrifice her originality. She is never obscure, still less is she ever offensive ; she knows how to blame and approve, how to instruct and encourage.

By a fatal coincidence, the very persons who had her reputation most at heart became the instruments of a forgery which injured her most cruelly.

The author of the mischief was Angliviel de la Beaumelle, a literary freelance, who had tried his hand at many things. He made the acquaintance of Louis Racine, the son of the great poet. Racine put at the disposal of La Beaumelle his rich collection of letters from Madame de Maintenon, and of documents concerning her. The result was that, without Racine's approval, La Beaumelle published in 1752, and under an assumed name, two hundred and ninety-eight letters supposed to have been written by Madame de Maintenon. When Racine read them, he found to his dismay that whole passages had been interpolated or changed, and that a hundred and eighty-five letters were entirely unknown to him. He put down in writing all the remarks and corrections which occurred to him, but he refrained from publishing anything against La Beaumelle, because the latter had attacked Voltaire, who retaliated by having him sent to the Bastille. After

his release, La Beaumelle published his *Memoirs on Madame de Maintenon.* He had succeeded in getting admittance to the archives of Saint-Cyr, and to those of Madame de Maintenon's heir, the Duc de Noailles. The "Letters" had an enormous success; the reputation of Madame de Maintenon was at its lowest ebb when they appeared, and they brought about a reaction in her favour. Her friends were misled into the belief that La Beaumelle, who professed the greatest admiration for her, was the very person to do her justice. They gave him all the information he asked for, and he went on publishing new volumes of letters and his fanciful biography of Madame de Maintenon. He did not deceive Voltaire, whose best historical work, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV.* had appeared. Voltaire detected at once that the romance of La Beaumelle was a tissue of downright lies and ludicrous mistakes. He showered abuse on the forger, called him "un fripon," and took the trouble to correct some of his most outrageous statements in notes to a later edition of the *Siècle.*

The "Letters," however, misled even Voltaire. He saw that most of their dates and many of their facts were wrong, and said so, but he did not perceive how entirely the style of La Beaumelle differed from the style of Madame de Maintenon, and how he had adapted her prose to the taste of the eighteenth century. People who worshipped Rousseau wanted sentimental effusions; those who admired Voltaire were fond of epigrammatic sentences. La Beaumelle supplied both; the famous saying attributed to Madame de Maintenon when speaking of the King: "I send him away, ever afflicted, never despairing," is an instance in point. La Beaumelle interpolated many such inventions in letters which were partly authentic; he concocted others with fragments from contemporary manuscripts, and enriched them with anecdotes which

he found in memoirs. He did it so cleverly that a hundred years after Voltaire, historians, like Ranke in Germany and Michelet in France, relied on his spurious compilations.

Fortunately, however, many, if not all, the letters left by Madame de Maintenon had escaped destruction. In this scholarly age an experienced historical writer, Th. Lavallée, undertook the laborious task of collecting a number of these letters and of publishing what he had found.[1] When he died his chief work had been carried on to the year 1704.

Another historian, Geffroy, proceeded on different lines. He published a nearly complete collection of all the important letters of Madame de Maintenon.

As it happened, the moment could not have been better chosen for the vindication of her memory.

About the middle of the nineteenth century the public heard for the first time what her two chief accusers had to say against her after an unbroken silence of more than a hundred years.

One of them was Louis de Rouvray, Duc de Saint-Simon; the other was Elisabeth Charlotte, of the house of Wittelsbach, Princess of the Palatinate, and second wife of the Duc d'Orléans. This royal lady was born in 1651, and died in 1721, long before Saint-Simon, who lived to be an octogenarian. They knew each other, and had many points in common. They both wrote incessantly, they were insanely proud of their descent, and they hated the same person—Madame de Maintenon. Before their tribunal she stands condemned.

The value of the indictment depends on the credibility of the accuser; precedence is due to Saint-Simon, a slanderer who possessed genius.

[1] Lavallée, *Madame de Maintenon: Correspondance générale*, 5 vols.; *Conseils aux demoiselles*, &c., 1857; *Lettres historiques et édifiantes*, 1856; *Lettres et entretiens sur l'éducation des filles*, 1861.

CALIFORNIA

MARQUIS DE SAINT-SIMON

In private life he was an honourable man, a good husband, a friend of the best and most enlightened men of his generation, both in Church and in State. His father had been promoted by Louis XIII. to the dignity of a *duc et pair*, which conferred on the holder of the title the first rank at Court. The pretensions of the family to a pedigree reaching as far back as Charlemagne evoked sceptical smiles. Saint-Simon himself firmly believed that the blood of the dynasty of Capet flowed in his veins, and he accordingly considered himself justified in despising not only common men, but especially those bourgeois favourites of fortune who had risen from the ranks of finance.

The annalist, whose historical portraits and sketches of character have been not unfavourably compared to those of Tacitus, devotes hundreds of pages to the solution of questions of precedence and similar points of Court etiquette, and finds it worth his while to refute harmless pretensions which excite his wrath. He abuses and insults persons of quality who dared to compete with him, the self-appointed guardian of aristocratic prerogative.

This over-estimation of self, which amounted to monomania, was doomed to bitter disappointment, and ultimately ruined his career. Saint-Simon had lost his father at an early age. His presence at the Court of Versailles remained unnoticed, and he never succeeded in winning the favour of the King, who instinctively disliked him. He then chose the military career, but found no opportunity of distinguishing himself, and afterwards failed to obtain promotion in diplomacy.

During the last period of the reign of the great monarch, Saint-Simon entered into close relations with the Duc d'Orléans, and flattered himself that he had become not only a favourite, but a trusted adviser of the Prince. In view of political developments, he

drafted a remarkable plan of reform based on the preponderance of the aristocratic element in the Government of the State. This programme remained a dead letter; its author, however, acquired some importance when the Duc d'Orléans became Regent of France, a period of success which came to an end at the Regent's death. In the reign of Louis XV. and of the powerful minister who governed in his name, Saint-Simon remained practically forgotten, and after many years of retirement he died in comparative oblivion. Very few people knew of the existence of the manuscript to which he had entrusted the disappointment inflicted on his ambition, his passionate interest in public affairs, his undying hatred, his enthusiastic partisanship, his honest convictions, and his narrow prejudices. They reveal the history of endless intrigues and of more than doubtful mysteries of the backstairs of Versailles; they recall revolting scandals and examples of admirable virtue, everything, in short, of which the memory stung or thrilled the author's stormy soul. Posterity granted him the renown which contemporary France had refused.

In the literature of the world Saint-Simon's Memoirs stand in the very first rank among records made by living witnesses. But first-rate commentators and critics have taught us how to read them; the incomparable erudition displayed by Monsieur de Boislisle in his notes to the classic edition alone supplies treasures of information. Saint-Simon, who was born in 1675, began to write in 1694, at the early age of nineteen. His youth, his inexperience, his frequent absences from Court, compelled him to rely on written material and on verbal reports. He showed no discrimination in the choice of his informants, and accepted the gossip of scandal-mongers as readily as the insinuations of pamphleteers. He trusted to his art, which transformed the vile metal into gold by

the magic of style, so that a few outlines, supplied by casual observers, enabled him to draw a marvellous picture. Whenever his own powers of observation came into play, he put back his canvas on the easel. In the Memoirs there are instances of more than a dozen portraits drawn from one and the same original. Moreover, Saint-Simon is no La Beaumelle; he does not forge. His method consists in attributing the worst motives and the vilest calculations to the victims of his unreasoning aversion. If he cannot blame their actions, he suspects their intentions; the indiscriminate adoption of true and false reports is the wrong which he usually inflicts. And yet Saint-Simon was considered to be a conscientious, religious man, and he certainly led a blameless life. In his old age he wrote a preface to his Memoirs, in which he raises the question whether a Christian is justified in revealing the worst about others? His answer is in the affirmative. He upholds the right of the historian to tell the whole truth and to condemn wrongdoing, evil, and sin. Moreover, he could plead in his favour that only a chosen few knew the contents of his writings, that he had deliberately renounced the vainglory of authorship and made posterity his judge.

By a curious accident, the foremost of German historians, Leopold von Ranke, published, not the first,[1] but the most valuable selection from the voluminous correspondence of Elisabeth Charlotte, at the very time when the Memoirs of Saint-Simon first appeared. The example bore fruit; not all but many of the letters which were daily written by the Duchess of Orléans to her relations at Heidelberg, Hanover, and elsewhere, have since been given to the public.

Attempts to modify their tone by suppressing the

[1] *Anekdoten vom französischen Hof . . . aus Briefen der Madame d'Orléans*, Braunschweig, 1789, is a first collection of her letters.

crudest passages proved futile; Elisabeth Charlotte would have her say, and with every new instalment of her epistles Madame de Maintenon fared worse.

The proud, excitable Saint-Simon had revenged himself for the indifference with which she seems to have overlooked his person and even his name, which she mentions but once in the course of many years.[1] The reasons for the Duchess of Orléans' hatred were more complicated, and Madame de Maintenon was not ignorant as to their nature.

If we are to believe Saint-Simon, Elisabeth Charlotte, great-granddaughter of James I., had one day to go down on her knees to the lady of mean birth who had become the anonymous Queen of France. The details rest on his sole authority, and may be exaggerated. The fact that the proud German Princess was compelled to apologise for unpardonable insults is corroborated by better evidence than his own. Madame de Maintenon forgave. It was the Duchess who never forgot the self-inflicted humiliation.

She broke her hasty vows of everlasting friendship and gratitude, and gave vent to her feelings in terms the grossness of which sorely tries the long-suffering patience of her admirers. The attitude of Madame de Maintenon remained what it had always been, distant, dignified, and mindful of the exalted rank of her antagonist.

She hardly ever mentions her; when compelled to do so, she complains in measured terms of "Madame's" error in considering her an enemy and treating her as such.

In Germany, Elisabeth Charlotte's memory is surrounded by a halo of grateful affection in return for her faithful devotion to the Fatherland. Out of this

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres de Madame de Maintenon*, ii. p. 76, 22 février 1707.

very natural feeling grew the legend of an unhappy princess, who was supposed to have spent her life in vain regret. This fiction is somewhat different from reality. Elisabeth Charlotte was not always unhappy in France; indeed there was a time when she had no reason whatever to look upon her marriage with the only brother of Louis XIV. as a calamity, and we owe her the justice to state that she did not attempt to do so. Her own letters until 1681, the testimony of those who knew her best, and the trials she had to undergo in her own family, leave no doubt on the subject.

Her father, Karl Ludwig, Elector of the Palatinate, was the son of the Winter King, whose short reign in Bohemia had ended in defeat and exile. After the Peace of Westphalia, which gave Karl Ludwig back his hereditary possessions, he found them pillaged, devastated, and reduced to such a state of misery and barbarism that cannibals were found among his peasantry. His first object was to favour the increase of the population by lightening its burdens. Strict economy, a severe but wise administration, enabled him to restore order in the finances of the State as well as in his own. Unfortunately, his private life afforded him no compensation for the difficulties he had to surmount as a sovereign. The insufferable temper of his consort turned his house into a pandemonium. The Elector soon came to detest the mother of his children, and their constant quarrels finally led to blows. Their only daughter, Elisabeth Charlotte, had the luck to escape from this dreary home. She spent her early years, not with her parents, but with her father's sister Sophia, Duchess, and subsequently Electress of Hanover, a clever, highly cultured lady, who surrounded her with motherly care. During her absence from Heidelberg, Karl Ludwig took an extraordinary step in order to recover domestic

happiness. He had a mistress, the gentle, submissive Louise von Degenfeld, of whom he was passionately fond. He contrived to obtain the consent of his Protestant consistory to a legal marriage with this lady, who in due course of time became the mother of a numerous tribe of Raugraves and Raugrävinnen. The legitimate wife protested and fought her battle as long as she could; at last she had to give in and to fulfil her husband's dearest wish by leaving him and Heidelberg for ever. His sordid avarice left her destitute, and at a later period her own daughter made use of pretexts and evasion for refusing her pecuniary assistance.

Elisabeth Charlotte became very fond of her half-brothers and sisters after her return to Heidelberg, but her bigamous father's second wife received such treatment at her hands that an early marriage remained the only possible solution her distracted family could think of. The difficulty was to find a husband, as the parsimonious Elector would not hear of a dowry. Anna Gonzaga, the widow of a prince of the Palatinate, who lived at Paris, happily came to the rescue. Louis XIV. had an only brother, Monsieur, Duc d'Orléans, who was a coxcomb. He used to paint himself, and wore ribbons and jewels like a woman; he was surrounded by minions whose character was such that public opinion credited them with having poisoned his first wife, Henrietta, the gifted and lovely daughter of Charles I. The rumour was unfounded, and it is proved that her sudden death was due to natural causes. "Monsieur" was no poisoner, but he was a man of dissolute habits and of a frivolous disposition, which education had encouraged, because it was considered advisable that the next heir to the throne should remain insignificant. He was naturally brave, and on one occasion he distinguished himself in the field. He was not granted another

opportunity, and from that time neither the King nor anybody else succeeded in separating the weak, indolent Prince for any length of time from his unworthy friends. "Monsieur," notwithstanding all his failings, had also redeeming points, very good manners, a witty conversation, an unfailing respectful devotion for his royal brother, and a very kind heart. Moreover, his rank and fortune made him a desirable match. The Elector was only too glad to accept him as a son-in-law and to consent privately to his daughter's change of religion. A proper teacher was accordingly despatched under an assumed name to Heidelberg, and the lessons commenced, though Karl Ludwig pretended to know nothing about them.

When Elisabeth Charlotte, after a very short probation, was received into the Roman Catholic Church, he affected the greatest surprise at this unexpected event. The Catholicism which she professed was always of a doubtful character; the grief with which she parted from her country and her friends was all the more sincere: it vented itself in floods of tears and loud lamentations, the excess of which she did not trouble to suppress. When she appeared at the most splendid Court of Europe to meet an unknown husband, she possessed eight shirts, which her father thought quite sufficient for the occasion. "Monsieur" received her with every demonstration of affection, and did not seem to mind the conspicuous ugliness of this bride of nineteen, who became very fond of him. She spoke of him as "the best man in the world."

Nearly ten years later, in 1679, when her aunt Sophia came to France, she also was able to report to her relations that "Lise Lotte," as they used to call her, was the happiest woman she had ever seen. A change, however, was impending. In 1682 the Electress received the following communication from her niece concerning Monsieur: "Il ne m'a jamais su

aimer, quand j'avais même la plus forte attache pour lui." The most intimate details about her married life and its shipwreck, with which Elisabeth Charlotte now favoured her family, were invariably followed by the assurance of how gladly she welcomed the recovery of her freedom. Nor could she think of anything more serious to complain of than the deficiencies of French cooking, which neither supplied her native sauerkraut, nor sausages and other delicacies, in which she delighted, while tea, coffee, and elaborate French ragouts revolted her taste. So did Court etiquette in all cases where her pretensions as a Wittelsbach electoral princess did not come into play; those of others she scorned with a disdain equalled only by that of Saint-Simon. At the same time, she did not conceal the fact that she had secured a friendship which compensated for many things.

Her friend was the King. Louis XIV. was still young; he enjoyed life, and liked to make it enjoyable to others. To his family he proved always tender-hearted, long-suffering, and affectionate. The German sister-in-law, who was unlike anybody he had ever known, attracted his fancy and won his sympathy. Her joyous laughter, her splendid horsemanship, her sharp common sense, her foreign accent, her daring jokes, amused and stimulated him. He liked her company when out hunting, or whenever he exchanged one country residence for another; he met her wishes, was anxious to please her, and in the light of his favour, she became the fashion at Versailles. His friendship made her happy, so happy that Paris and the Court began to smile at the "passion" of "Madame" for the King, to which even Madame de Maintenon once jestingly alludes. One day, in 1682, "Monsieur" took it into his head to indulge in a scene, and to declare that he had reason to be jealous of the plainest woman in France. Louis XIV. acted

as peacemaker between the two, as he always did, and then it was that Lise Lotte made the astounding statement: "Sire, if ever I had a gallantry, 'Monsieur' would have to complain of your Majesty, and of nobody else." The King laughed, and replied, with the perfect courtesy which marked his intercourse with all women, that neither he nor any gentleman in the realm had ever doubted Madame's virtue for a single moment. The general impression was that, coming from his side, a less emphatic vindication of her honour would have satisfied the royal lady. The estrangement which followed was brought about by politics. The Elector of the Palatinate, the only brother of Elisabeth Charlotte, having died without issue in 1685, Louis XIV. claimed her dowry, which had never been paid, and the inheritance, to which she had become entitled. She had approved of both measures, but she was not prepared for the tactics of Louvois. The assertion of her rights served as a pretext for the invasion of her native country, and for the ruthless cruelty with which the war was carried on and Heidelberg destroyed. The grief of Elisabeth Charlotte amounted to despair, and would have been sufficient to account for the changed attitude of the King. But her womanly feelings had suffered no less than her patriotism; the devastation of the Palatinate coincided with the elevation of Madame de Maintenon.

After the death of the Queen, in 1684, when it became evident to all who could see that the Marquise had secured the monarch's affection, the charm of which had not found Lise Lotte unappreciative, the haughty Princess lost all self-control, and never recovered it. Madame de Maintenon was made responsible for all she had to suffer. The repeated assertion in her correspondence, that a few minutes' private conversation with the King would have sufficed for her to reveal the scandalous past of Scarron's widow, is evidently

an empty boast. She saw the monarch daily; nothing could have prevented her from stating facts had facts been available. They were not, and she was never able to substantiate her charges.

Madame de Maintenon had yet other enmities to contend with. Courtiers who were always in need of money or promotion, statesmen and soldiers whose ambitions were thwarted, made her responsible for the King's refusal or displeasure; greedy petitioners, who applied to her, never forgave her for having failed to help. She knew it, too, full well. One day a poor woman appealed to her for the redress of insults which she had received. "Insults!" replied Madame de Maintenon; "but don't you know that here at Court we live on insults? It seems to me that a very small amount of virtue is required to forgive offences such as these."

When everything which has ever been brought forward against this remarkable woman is weighed in the balance, an impartial judgment will decide in her favour. The designing hypocrite, in whose arts the world believed too long, is unknown to history. Its annals record errors of judgment and speak of doubtful compromises, which were more excusable in her time than in our own. She did not rise above its prejudices, nor were her intellectual gifts of the exceptional quality which amounts to genius. Her powers for good were limited by a will to whose dictates she had to submit, but conscience governed her life. The unfailing tact and incomparable dignity of her bearing, the unselfish devotion of more than thirty years to what she considered a sacred trust, justified the choice of the King.

Louis XIV., notwithstanding many faults, remains one of the most commanding figures in "the fierce light which beats upon a throne." The glorious chimera of omnipotence, which even he failed to

realise, belongs to the past. The proud formula of despotism, "I am the State," has lost its meaning for nations which have tasted of the fruit of freedom. And yet modern Europe has not settled accounts with the system embodied in the greatest of the Bourbons. "Against whom do you wage war?" inquired Adolphe Thiers on his weary pilgrimage through Europe after the crushing defeat of his country. The question was put to Leopold von Ranke, when both historians met at Vienna in 1870. "Against Louis XIV.," replied the German.

It is the object-lesson of history to trace this connection between past and present. The unrivalled scholarship of the best men in France has been devoted to the task. We owe it to them if the seventeenth century has been recalled into life. The chief actors, their achievements, their aspirations, their motives and their errors have been impartially described in a language not unworthy of the days when Pascal wrote and Bossuet preached. Truth, which silenced flattery, has refuted slander. To Louis XIV. as well as to Madame de Maintenon the inquiry has, on the whole, proved a gain. We have come to know them as they really were, not faultless, but ennobled by that touch of greatness which will ever belong to the best traditions of France.

LOUIS XIV.

AND

MADAME DE MAINTENON

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, AND MARRIAGE OF FRANÇOISE D'AUBIGNÉ

"De petit noblesse" is an expression used by Agrippa d'Aubigné when speaking of his family. Yet, in later days, the endeavours of obsequious genealogists to shed lustre on her ancestry did not find his granddaughter indifferent.

The d'Aubignés came from Saintonge. Theodore-Agrippa, the grandfather of Françoise d'Aubigné, has left his mark in French history, and still more in French literature.[1] This poet and historian was a staunch, never an austere Protestant, a courtier, a rude soldier of fortune, as capable of heroism as of brigandage and cruelty. His career of adventures came to an end after his marriage with an heiress had made him a land-owner in Poitou. From 1576 he followed the fortunes of Henri of Navarre, who appreciated his bravery,

[1] Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Mémoires*, Sur l'éducation des filles; G. Guizot, *Agrippa d'Aubigné; La France protestante*, 2de Ed., article "Aubigné"; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, Edition Boislisle, viii. pp. 77–78, 453–454, &c.; Th. Lavallée, *La famille d'Aubigné et l'Enfance de Madame de Maintenon.*

sometimes took his advice, and always tolerated his frankness of speech, of which records exist.

After the battle of Coutras, in 1587, d'Aubigné and another officer, La Force, shared the same bed in a room next door to the King's. "La Force," said d'Aubigné, "our master is a dirty miser and the most ungrateful mortal on the face of the earth." "What do you say?" inquired La Force, who was half asleep. Whereupon the King, who had overheard every word, repeated the speech to him. Next morning he showed no displeasure and gave no money. "He equally disliked to reward and to punish," d'Aubigné tells us, despite the fact that in course of time he received high honours at his hands and was made vice-admiral of Aunis and Saintonge. He never approved of the change of religion on the part of Henri IV., whom he loved and against whom he conspired and intrigued. His famous satires, *Les Tragiques*, are an eloquent memorial of his indignant protest against the vices and the corruption of his troubled age. The King himself was not spared. When he showed him his lip, which had been cut by the knife of an assassin, d'Aubigné said: "Sire, you have renounced God with your lips and He has pierced them. If you renounce Him with your heart, He will pierce that too."[1]

After the death of his master, d'Aubigné wrote the *History*, which immortalises the author and the sovereign whom he never ceased to regret. Under the reign of Louis XIII. he became involved in conspiracy and rebellion, was condemned to death, and fled to Geneva, where, in his old age, he married again and built at Crest, on the banks of the lake, a château which still exists. When his daughters consulted him as to whether a scientific education was advisable for young ladies of their station, a question which even in those days was much debated, old d'Aubigné

[1] Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, Préface.

answered in the negative. Such a culture, he said, would be sure to interfere with their duties as wives and mothers, and lead to discord in their future households. "The nightingale," he added, "ceases to sing as soon as it has young ones." By a curious coincidence, he expresses ideas which were put into practice by his granddaughter, when she founded Saint Cyr.[1] D'Aubigné would have ended his days in comparative peace, under the protection of the Republic, but for the disgraceful conduct of his only son, who heaped shame and sorrow on his father's head.

Constant d'Aubigné, born in 1585, and called Baron de Surimeau after a property inherited from his mother, led a wild and dissolute life. He became a forger, a bankrupt, a renegade, and a traitor.[2] From 1627 onwards he passed from one jail into another—at La Rochelle, Angers, Poitiers, Bordeaux, and Niort. Agrippa deemed it a pardonable offence for Constant to kill his faithless wife and her lover on the spot. But when he revealed to the French Government his father's negotiations with England and the Calvinists, he disinherited and cursed him. Unfortunately for those who became his victims, Constant also possessed attractive qualities. When he was in prison at Château-Trompette, Bordeaux, he seduced Jeanne de Cardilhac, daughter of the officer in command of the fort; she became his second wife and the mother of a son, was repudiated by her parents, and spent her life in misery at the side of such a husband. In 1630, when his father died, he had recovered his liberty.

Two years later he was again prisoner at Niort, whither his wife followed him. Within the walls of the prison their second son, Charles, was born in 1634.

November 27, 1635, is the birthday of their only

[1] M. G. Fagniez, "La femme et la société française dans la première moité du XVII. Siècle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 janv. 1909.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *La famille d Aubigné*, p. 75, note 2.

daughter, Françoise. Her mother being a Catholic, the nephew of the first Duc de la Rochefoucauld (then a mere boy), and a distant relative, Suzanne de Baudéau, the eldest daughter of Monsieur de Neuillan, the officer in command at Niort, acted as godfather and godmother to "the little innocent," who was baptized on November 28.

After another year spent with her husband, Madame d'Aubigné left Niort and went to Paris, where she tried for several years to recover some money from her husband's creditors. One of them, a man of doubtful character, who had made himself sole proprietor of Surimeau, completed the ruin of the family. At the same time d'Aubigné accused his wife of wilful neglect, and wrote "factums" against her. She had to defend herself in touching and dignified appeals to Madame de Villette, her sister-in-law, whose kindness, as well as that of her husband, never failed her.[1] They were both charitable and excellent people, who lived at the Château de Mursay, not far from Niort.

Immediately after the birth of Françoise they had taken care of the child, and they did so repeatedly, without separating her for any length of time from her father.[2] While his little daughter shared his prison, Madame d'Aubigné tried to obtain his release from Cardinal Richelieu, who answered truly enough, "You would be happy if I refused."[3] It was only after the death of Richelieu, in 1642, when Mazarin proclaimed an amnesty, that d'Aubigné, after ten years, recovered his liberty. He was entirely destitute, and was obliged to live on the charity of friends till 1645, when the Compagnie des Iles de l'Amérique appointed him governor of Marie-Galante, a little island in the

[1] Th. Lavallée, *La famille d'Aubigné*, pp. 49–69, 80–81 (reprinted in *Correspondance générale*, &c., i. pp. 11–31).

[2] Th. Lavallée, *La famille d'Aubigné*, pp. 62, 69.

[3] D'Haussonville et Hanotaux, *Mémoires de Mademoiselle d'Aumale*.

West Indies, near Guadeloupe. During the passage Françoise fell so ill that the cannon which was to be fired off at the lowering of the body into the sea stood ready charged. When they reached Marie-Galante, they found the island inhabited by savages; nothing remained for the emigrants but to seek refuge in neighbouring isles, where they depended for eighteen months on the goodwill of the officials and colonists. The only record which exists about that period is to be found in short notes of a fellow-traveller, Cabart de Villermont.[1] He was a man of culture, a linguist, and an explorer, who had known Madame d'Aubigné in France. He mentions having spent some time with her at Martinique and two months at St. Christopher as guests of the commander, Poincy. D'Aubigné joined them there, and in 1647 the family re-embarked for France, and landed at La Rochelle, where, according to one biographer, Madame d'Aubigné had to beg for her children's food at the door of the College of Jesuits.[2] She had to take sole charge of them while her husband went under an assumed name to the south of France in search of a livelihood.

Mercenary motives induced him to return to the Protestant faith; it is believed that he was on his way to the Turks when he died at Orange towards the end of 1647.

About the same time his eldest son perished by accident or in a duel.[3] The unhappy mother, who, to judge by a few of her letters which are extant,[4] was a woman of intelligence, energy, and peaceful disposition, had been so hardened by misfortune that her daughter

[1] Walkenaer, *Mémoires sur Madame de Sévigné*, v.; Victor Cousin, *Madame de Sablé*, App. IX. p. 403; De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, pp. 40–44.

[2] Père Laguille, *Mémoires*, in Fournier, *Variétés hist. et litt.*

[3] La Beaumelle, *Mémoires*, vi. p. 31. (*Pièces non suspectes.*)

[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale de Madame de Maintenon*, i. pp. 11–31.

did not remember having been kissed by her more than once. After her husband's death Madame d'Aubigné returned alone to Paris. For two years she tried to recover the little that was left out of the inheritance of Agrippa d'Aubigné. She became involved in new law-suits, and had to earn her livelihood chiefly by the work of her hands. However, she had seen her children provided for before she left their native Poitou. Her son Charles became a page in the household of the Marquis de Parabère-Pardaillan, governor of the province, and a relative of the Neuillans.[1] His sister Françoise found a second mother in Madame de Villette, who was again moved to pity by her sad fate, and made *Bignette*, as she was called, happy for the first time in her life. Her house would have remained the home of her niece had not a new difficulty separated them for ever. Madame de Villette, Agrippa's favourite daughter, was an ardent Calvinist, who considered it her duty to bring Françoise back to the faith of her forefathers. She succeeded so well that Madame d'Aubigné herself had to punish the child because she refused to accompany her to mass.[2] In her absence Madame de Neuillan felt bound to interfere. She had become a widow, and her eldest daughter, who had acted as godmother to Françoise, was one of the ladies of Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV. A written order from her entitled Madame de Neuillan to take charge of Françoise, and to send her to a convent of Ursuline nuns at Niort, who were to bring her back to Catholicism. To their surprise, the girl resisted; her heart belonged to Madame de Villette. In a most touching letter to her she described those convents as "hells, worse than death," and appealed to her for protection.[3]

[1] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, p. 9.
[2] Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, i. p. 5.
[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance génerale*, i. p. 33.

Provoked by this opposition, Madame de Neuillan came and fetched her away. She was known to be a harsh, avaricious woman; although she drove six horses and lived in plenty, she never paid the pension due to the nuns. It is recorded how, in after days, Madame de Maintenon paid the debt. Yet there is no bitterness in the tone in which she describes how she and the second daughter of Madame de Neuillan were sent to the farmyard to watch the turkeys. "It was the first court over which I presided," she added with a smile.[1] The two girls wore wooden shoes, had rods in their hands, and masks over their faces to save their complexion. At the same time they were ordered to learn by heart every day a few pages of Pibrac.[2] This statesman and moralist of the sixteenth century had composed *Quatrains*, the knowledge of which was considered part of every solid education. They can hardly be called poetry, but they were supposed to teach wisdom:

> "Aye de toi plus que des autres honte,
> Nul plus que toy par toy n'est offensé,
> Tu dois premier, si bien y as pensé,
> Rendre de toy à toy mesme le compte."

All the biographers of Madame de Maintenon corroborate the statement of contemporaries that Madame de Neuillan wanted to get rid of her ward.[3] She tried to do so as early as 1649 by taking her to her mother in Paris. Madame d'Aubigné had been compelled to agree to a transaction with her husband's family, which left her a yearly income of two hundred livres. It meant starvation, and when Françoise arrived, the unfortunate lady had retreated once more to Poitou, whereupon her daughter was sent to

[1] *Conseils et Instructions aux demoiselles de Saint Cyr*, i. pp. 4, 98.
[2] J. Claretie, *Les Quatrains de Pibrac.* Molière, *Sganarelle.*
[3] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 43; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, i. p. 24; Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, vii. p. 38.

another convent of Ursuline nuns. It was situated in a suburb, rue Saint-Jacques; a pious lady had provided it with funds for the education of poor girls. Happily for Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, she was taken care of by a very sensible, attractive nun, to whom she became passionately devoted.[1] Under her influence and after a disputation, which she requested should be held in her presence, between a Calvinist minister and a Catholic priest, the religious doubts and perplexities of Françoise seem to have vanished. Yet, before she yielded, she had to be assured that Madame de Villette would not undergo punishment in the next world for her creed here below.

Education in a convent did not mean seclusion; Mademoiselle d'Aubigné spent much of her time with Madame de Neuillan and returned once more with her to Poitou. This lady, when in Paris, lived in the house of a cousin or brother, Pierre Tiraqueau, Baron de Saint-Herman.[2] The house stood near the Hôtel de Troyes, where, since 1649, the burlesque poet and wit, Paul Scarron, had inhabited a spacious apartment. The melancholy fact that he was paralysed appealed to people's sympathies, and to visit Scarron became the fashion in the best society of Paris. Mademoiselle de Saint-Herman, who went there, introduced Madame de Neuillan.[3] The first indication that she had brought Françoise with her is in an undated note of Scarron to his future wife. He says that a letter of hers, addressed from Poitou to Mademoiselle de Saint-Herman, had filled him with remorse for not having noticed how clever was the little girl in short frocks who had paid him a visit six months before.[4] In a second letter, he is concerned about her

[1] Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres et entretiens sur l'éducation*, ii. p. 347.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. pp. 20–28; Segrais, *Œuvres diverses, Segraisiana.*
[3] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, pp. 37–39.
[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 39, 40–43.

health, and sends her verses which are in the very worst taste.

They had another interest in common. Cabart de Villermont, the friend of the d'Aubignés, was also a friend of Scarron, and gave him details about them. Madame de Maintenon herself never alludes to her stay in the West Indies. It is mere conjecture that she had been impressed by their glorious scenery and she evidently did not care to revive the painful memories connected with this adventurous episode of her childhood. But others remembered it, surrounded her with a halo of poetry, and called her "la belle Indienne." Scarron was personally concerned in the matter. He had made up his mind to go to the tropics, and the experience of Villermont, who was an authority on colonial affairs, proved invaluable.[1]

The motives which decided Scarron to expatriate himself were most complicated. He belonged to a family by no means inferior in rank to the d'Aubignés, and hardly less unlucky.[2] Paul Scarron, born in 1610, had a father who was quarrelsome and eccentric, and a stepmother whose failings he delighted to caricature. His education was not neglected; early in life he enjoyed high patronage and saw the best company. Pierre de Gondy, since then Cardinal de Retz, was the associate of his youthful follies. Marie de Hautefort, one of the most charming and irreproachable ladies at Court, was gracious to him. Scarron was never ordained a priest, but he received a canonicate at Le Mans and high preferment in the Church without fulfilling any of its obligations. He disliked the province and in 1635 went to Rome with his bishop, who was as gay as himself, squandered his revenues in dubious company, and contracted, at

[1] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, pp. 46–48.

[2] Paul Morillot, *Scarron et le genre burlesque;* J. Jusserand, *English Essays from a French Pen: Paul Scarron*, pp. 69–72.

twenty-eight years of age, a fatal illness—a complicated case of tuberculous affection of the vertebræ, rendered incurable by the treatment of a well-known practician.[1]

Since 1640, Scarron had definitely taken up his abode in Paris, in company with his favourite sister. He never ceased to care for her, although she lived publicly with a French duke who had a wife, and Scarron entertained his associates with cynical rhymes about his sister's shame. Unable to move, he collected a mixed society round his armchair. There were smart men of pleasure, *libertins*, the freethinkers of the age, like the modern-minded sceptic Saint-Evremond and the Chevalier de Méré; also wits, academicians, and men of letters—Segrais, Pellisson, Ménage, Marigni, and others. This queer company included high-born ladies, who came partly out of pity for the poor cripple, who jested and laughed at his own sufferings, partly out of curiosity and the desire to be amused. They were not prudes, and did not object to meet, there and elsewhere, the celebrated courtesan, Ninon de Lenclos, whose charm of manner made amends for her mode of life, and whose culture contrasted with her morals. At the Hôtel de Rambouillet the refined company of *précieuses*, which had enriched the language and enhanced the grace of social intercourse, was on the eve of dispersion. Long before Molière, Scarron led the reaction against its extravagances, ridiculed its mannerism, and boldly dedicated his satire against the pedants "to his friend," Mademoiselle de Scudéry, the muse of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Want of money first compelled him to make use of his talents. From 1643, the Parisians knew his *Vers burlesques* by heart. These were followed in rapid succession by satires, parodies, and comedies. Scarron became the favourite of a frivolous

[1] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, p. 39, note 5.

public and reaped a harvest of gold. He might have enriched himself, had he not been reckless in his expenditure, extravagant in his tastes, and most generous and kind-hearted. He gave with both hands, and never hesitated to beg for himself. He appealed to the public, who rarely disappointed him; to the Queen-mother, who granted him a big pension and the title he asked for—"le malade de la Reine"; he went for assistance to princes and great noblemen, and seemed at last provided for, when the Fronde increased his popularity and emptied his purse.

At the very beginning of the war he was suspected of intrigues against the Court and lost his pension. From that moment the Hôtel de Troyes became the favourite resort of conspirators of high degree, the majority of whom were friends of Scarron.[1] He could not draw the sword, but he hurled into the fray explosives of pasquills, darts of epigrammes,[2] and finally, the "Mazarinades" against the Cardinal. It is probable that Mazarin was not ignorant as to who was the author of the venomous and cynical attack which appeared in 1651.[3] At the end of that same year he returned from exile, and joined the Court at Poitiers. Scarron chose this moment to let the Parisian public know that, in a few months, he would bid farewell to France and try and recover his health at Cayenne.[4] He had made his preparations, and put some money in a new company for the exploration of Guiana. Cabart de Villermont had become an inmate of the Hôtel de Troyes, and a lodger of Scarron's. He stayed three years, and his valet, La Fleur, prepared sweet dishes for the poet, who was a great gourmand.

[1] Segrais, *Œuvres*, i. p. 164; *Segraisiana*, p. 147.
[2] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, pp. 34–35, 70.
[3] Morillot, *Scarron et le genre burlesque*, pp. 220, 230.
[4] Loret, *Gazette rimée*, 1651, décembre 31; Morillot, *P. Scarron et le genre burlesque*, pp. 77, 79. Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, vii. pp. 37, 38.

Cabart claims the merit of having suggested to Scarron how to compose his celebrated *Roman comique*, in imitation of "Don Quixote,"[1] the first and only volume of which appeared in 1651. About the end of the same year Françoise d'Aubigné, who had returned to Paris, received from Scarron the following proposal: Would she enter a convent and be a nun? in which case he would provide the necessary funds. She refused. The next question was, Would she consent to marry him? She accepted. This is all which is known for certain about this crisis in the young girl's life.

She was not yet sixteen, and it is impossible to suppose that she weighed the consequences of what she was doing. Her mother knew and consented. In a letter dated from Bordeaux, she wrote to Cabart and asked him to take Françoise to a convent till the time of her marriage, which had to be indefinitely postponed on account of her youth. Cabart then took her back to the rue Saint-Jacques. She did not wait long. At the instance of Scarron, they were privately married, probably on April 4, 1652. The last record of Madame d'Aubigné is the procuration she sent to Cabart, to act as her representative for the settlement. He and Saint-Herman were witnesses; the name of Madame de Neuillan is not mentioned.[2]

Anecdotes about this extraordinary occurrence abound not one of which can be verified.[3] The general impression was that the sordid avarice of Madame de Neuillan was responsible for it. She is said to have encouraged a marriage which, disgraceful as it was, seemed to many, under the circumstances, a stroke of

[1] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, pp. 40-41.

[2] Ibid., pp. 40, 43, 53-58, 60.

[3] Le Beaumelle, *Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon*, 1757, pp. 154-160; Tallemant, *Historiettes*, vii. p. 37; Père Laguille, *Mémoires*, Ed. Fournier, pp. 66, 67; Loret, *Muse historique*, 9 juin 1652; Madame Dunoyer, *Lettres hist. et galantes*, i. Lettre X.

CALIFORNIA

PAUL SCARRON
(Madame de Maintenon's first husband)

CALIFORNIA

fortune for the destitute, abandoned girl.[1] Once, and once only, did Madame de Maintenon allude to the nature of her union with Scarron. In 1678 she wrote to her brother, "You will find it strange *that a woman who was never married* should give you so much information about marriage."[2] Scarron describes himself as being so lame that he could neither turn round in his bed nor flick away a fly if it chose to settle on his nose.

It is needless further to insist on the fact that, for eight years, the young wife who presided over his household acted as his nurse.

[1] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, p. 3; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, i. chap. xviii.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. p. 2.

CHAPTER II

MADAME SCARRON

In September 1652, after the return of the Court to Paris and the exile of the leaders of the Fronde, Scarron deemed it advisable not to await the triumphant arrival of Mazarin, and to disappear, for a time at least, from the scene of his political exploits. He left with his wife for Touraine, and it was generally believed that their intention was to embark for Cayenne. They never got farther than the Loire. The convoy which was to receive them had left; a mutiny broke out on board another ship in which they were to sail, and the plan of emigration, if ever seriously entertained, was abandoned for ever. Scarron, who had sold his preferment in the Church, now recovered some property from his family and returned to Paris with his wife at the beginning of 1653. For a short time they accepted the hospitality of his sister, then, in 1654, they took a house in the Marais, rue neuve Saint-Louis.[1] The Marais was inhabited by the foremost people in France. There stood the hotels of the aristocracy, some of which still exist and bear witness to the admirable taste, the beauty and splendour of an artistic age. Their inmates had always been friendly to the poet; now they paid willing homage to his charming wife. At first she was timid, even to tears. She soon, however, acquired dignified self-possession and showed rare tact. When the tone of the conversation became too free, she quietly

[1] De Boislisle, *Paul Scarron*, pp. 60–66; Morillot, *Scarron*, pp. 77, 78.

retired to her room.[1] A young admirer remarked one day that he would sooner show disrespect to the Queen than to Madame Scarron.[2] Shortly after their marriage Scarron's friends found him "improved in many ways." He consulted his wife on questions of style, and taught her Italian, Spanish, and Latin.[3]

The Chevalier de Méré, a refined epicurean and distinguished writer, also prided himself on having contributed to her mental culture. In a letter to the Duchesse de Lesdiguières, he describes Madame Scarron:[4]

"She is not only beautiful, and of that kind of beauty which is always pleasing; but she is also sweet-tempered, discreet and of a grateful disposition, trustworthy, modest and very intelligent, and she makes use of these gifts to amuse others and to win their sympathy. What I most appreciate in so young a woman is that honest gentlemen are the only ones whose homage she accepts, wherefore it seems to me that she is not in great danger. Yet the smartest courtiers and the most powerful financiers try to succeed. If I know her well, she won't be easily conquered. . . . What irritates me, I confess, is her steadfast devotion to duty, in spite of the endeavours of those who try to convert her." Méré was one of them, and there were others. The friends of Condé, the clients of Retz, Marshal d'Albret, who had royal blood in his veins; Rochechouart, the brother of Madame de Montespan, who became Duc de Mortemart; Elbeuf, a prince of the house of Lorraine; the elder Duc de Beauvillier, the Marquis de Villarceaux and Beuvron, had illustrious names and bad records. Scarron never dreamed of depriving himself of their assistance and of their society

[1] Scarron, *Dernières Œuvres*, "Epître à Pélisson," ii. pp. 42, 43; Tallemant des Réaux, *Histoire du petit Scarron*.

[2] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, p. 123, note 5.

[3] *Segraisiana*, p. 142.

[4] Th. Lavallée, *Corresp. gén.*, i. p. 65; Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits litt.*, III., "Méré."

out of respect for his wife's reputation. Not one of those who knew her in those days ever attacked it. Segrais, Boisrobert, Sorbier, are loud in her praise. Story-tellers by profession, like Tallemant des Réaux, filled their daily chronicles with detailed accounts of her doings, without being able to find fault. Nevertheless the tone of eulogies like the following is offensive enough: "She is well received everywhere; at present it is generally believed that she has not ventured to take the plunge—*n'a point fait le saut.*" "She did not deign to be offended," said her husband, who obliged Gilles Boileau, the brother of the great poet, to retract insulting epigrams against his wife and himself.[1] But Scarron too was incorrigible; he indulged in licentious jests about his most private concerns, was always talking of himself and informing the public of the state of his affairs. Yet, in one of his better and more serious moods, he addressed verses to Mademoiselle de Scudéry which contain these lines on Madame Scarron:

> "Celle par qui le ciel soulage mon malheur,
> Digne d'un autre époux comme d'un sort meilleur,"[2]

and Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who entirely shared this view, drew a most flattering portrait of her young friend, whose beauty and virtues she extolled under the name of Lyriane in her heroic romance *Clélie.* Her praise is no exaggeration.

The portrait of Madame Scarron, by Mignard, who belonged to Scarron's circle, is unfortunately lost. But in the collection of the Louvre there is an enamel by Petitot, the classic features of which are remarkable for a peculiar and graceful dignity rare in one so young.[3] Men admired and courted, but women loved

[1] Morillot, *Scarron*, pp. 94–96, note 4, pp. 102, 106, 107; *Segraisiana*, p. 105.
[2] Scarron, *Œuvres*, vii. p. 161; "Epître à Mlle. de Scudéry."
[3] Morillot, *Scarron*, p. 114; Scarron, *Œuvres*, vii. p. 265.

her, and the greatest ladies treated her as their equal. Her intercourse with Madame de Sévigné, Mesdames de Richelieu, d'Albret, de Montchevreuil, and others led to lifelong friendship. Marie Mancini, the niece of Mazarin, who at one time was on the point of becoming Queen of France, asked Madame Scarron to her residence in the country. She had to refuse because she could not afford a carriage. When Christina, Queen of Sweden, visited Paris, she asked Scarron and his wife to come and see her, and congratulated the poet on his choice.[1] She also saw Ninon, whose friendship for Scarron now included Madame Scarron, and became an intimacy which lasted for years. Strange as it certainly was, it caused no scandal.

In the meantime the penury of the household grew worse and worse. Scarron borrowed, speculated, and believed in quacks of every sort and kind, who robbed him of the little that was left. Appearances had to be kept up, while the daily expenses could not be met. Neither the Queen nor Mazarin would listen to the repentant Scarron's humble apologies and protests of loyalty. The Queen remarked sarcastically that the marriage of her former *protégé* was a mistake, and that a consort was the most useless piece of his furniture.[2] The Cardinal did not even answer his pitiable appeals, although Scarron was finally pardoned, and died a pensioner of the Court.[2]

At the lowest ebb of his fortunes matters became complicated by the arrival of Charles d'Aubigné, who was penniless also. He was now an officer and had inherited the pleasant ways and most of the vices of his father; he always proved a failure, and was the torment of his sister, who, though she harboured no

[1] Morillot, *Scarron*, p. 113, notes; Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 74, 99.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. p. 66; Scarron, *Œuvres*, i. p. 192; De Boislisle, *Scarron*, p. 76, note 2; Morillot, *Scarron*, pp. 121–123.

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illusions about him, had a lasting affection for this worthless brother. The kind-hearted Scarron supplied "the poorest gentleman in France" with funds, and clamoured more than ever for everything he could get —loans, furniture, carriages to drive in, books, and little dogs for his private amusement, even wine and delicacies for his table. When, notwithstanding the goodwill of friends, the joint was missing at the dinners with which he never ceased to entertain them, the servant whispered in Madame Scarron's ear to make good the deficiency by an anecdote.[1] She did better and succeeded in getting from the all-powerful minister Fouquet a yearly pension of sixteen hundred livres and other gifts besides. Scarron knew him, and Madame Fouquet, a very proud and much-respected lady, grew fond of Madame Scarron, asked her to Vaux, her famous country seat, and constantly interceded on her behalf.[2]

If, as has often been asserted, pity was one of the motives which led Scarron to marry Françoise d'Aubigné, he soon found out that he had made a very good bargain, and was grateful. At the approach of death he said to Segrais: "My only regret in leaving this world is that I cannot provide for my wife, who is a person of infinite merit, and with whom I have every imaginable reason to be satisfied." [3]

In direct contradiction to this emphatic testimony, Saint-Simon talks about "the infamies of the early life of Madame Scarron." [4] His accusation rests on the evidence of three persons—Charles d'Aubigné, Tallemant and La Fare, unless it is entirely based on the contents of worthless and outrageous pamphlets

[1] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, &c., pp. 76, 78-80; Morillot, *Scarron*, pp. 97–98, 118–121; La Beaumelle, *Mémoires*, i. p. 164.

[2] Morillot, *Scarron*, pp. 113, 122–124; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance generale*, i. pp. 66, 67.

[3] *Segraisiana*, p. 85.

[4] Saint-Simon, *Memoires*, i. p. 12; *Considérations préliminaires.*

published in Holland against Madame de Maintenon.[1] He says of d'Aubigné: "It was a pleasure to hear him talk about the days of Scarron and the Hôtel d'Albret. He was not reticent on the subject of the adventures and of the gallantries of his sister, which he contrasted with her later piety, and of which he spoke openly before everybody. He would not be stopped, and I have often laughed at the embarrassment of my parents, whom he visited oftener than they liked, and who did not know what to do."[2] We are not informed what d'Aubigné said. We only know that he used foul language, even when speaking of the sister to whom he owed everything. Tallemant, who had not suspected the virtue of Madame Scarron in her husband's lifetime, mentions that, when a widow, she accompanied Ninon on a journey, and that they had "leur galant commun, Villarceaux."[3] In 1663 he corrects his own story: "Villarceaux goes on seeing her, but she behaves very stiffly to him."[3]

Fifty years later, La Fare, a discontented courtier, wrote his Memoirs. He praises the "honest conduct" of Madame Scarron, but he adds, "People assert positively that Villarceaux was in love with her, and that she treated him well."[4] Villarceaux was a discarded lover of Ninon. In an undated letter, published in 1862, and supposed to have been written by her in her old age to Saint-Evremond,[5] she says: "Scarron was my friend. His wife delighted me with her conversation, and, in those days, I found her unfit for love

[1] L. de Laborde, *Histoire de la gravure en manière noire* ("Caricatures de Mme. de Maintenon"); Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, &c., i. p. 336; ii. p. 59, note 1, "Liste de libelles imprimés en Hollande et en Angleterre contre Madame de Maintenon."

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 295–300.

[3] Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, 1663.

[4] La Fare, *Mémoires*, Ed. Michaud et Poujoulat, p. 287.

[5] Feuillet de Conches, *Causeries d'un Curieux*, ii. p. 588; Bret, *Ninon de Lenclos*; E. Colombey, *Ninon de Lenclos, corresp. auth.*, pp. 33, 79.

trop gauche pour l'amour. As to details, I know nothing, but I have often lent my yellow room to her and to Villarceaux." The best judges in literary matters do not consider this letter authentic.[1] Even if it were, no woman of otherwise spotless reputation has ever lost her fair name on the grounds of such vague accusations. Saint-Simon is careful to be more precise. He affirms that she was "the mistress of *three* men (!) Villarceaux,[2] Beuvron, the foolish old Villars, father of the Marshal, and of many others." He repeats the story no less than three times: "Montchevreuil was a Mornay, of high birth, no head, and as poor as a rat. He lived with Villarceaux, a rich debauchee, and with his brother, the Abbé. Villarceaux entertained Madame Scarron for a long time, and kept her during the summer at Villarceaux. His wife, whose virtue and sweet disposition inspired him with a sort of respect, proved an obstacle to the husband. So he proposed to his cousin, Montchevreuil, that he should come to his house with his company and spread the tablecloth for them all. This was accepted with joy, and they spent many summers in this way at Montchevreuil."

Saint-Simon does not say that Madame de Villarceaux was extremely jealous, that both she and Madame de Montchevreuil, two excellent and universally respected ladies, were devoted to Madame de Maintenon. She often mentions the names of their husbands and those of other admirers, like the old Marshal d'Albret and the Duc de Richelieu. Their houses were always open to her, she corresponded

[1] Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon, d'après sa Correspondance authentique*, Introduction; F. Brunetière, "Madame de Maintenon," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1 fevr. 1887; Hervé, *Discours de Reception à l'Académie*, 10 fevr. 1887; I. Barbey d'Aurévilly, *Essais.*

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii. p. 92; i. pp. 106–108; viii. p. 28; ix. p. 276; xii. p. 99; vi. Appendices, p. 587; De Boislisle, *Scarron*, &c., pp. 118–119.

with them; and Richelieu, who survived her, reminded her in 1714 of the respect and veneration he had always felt for her and which her elevation could not increase.[1]

The "passion" of Villarceaux was well known to the world at large, and not ignored by Scarron.[2] In 1659 his friend Boisrobert advised the Marquis in humorous verses not to pour out his heart and lavish his sighs at the shrine of a proud and reserved beauty who did not care for him. As to the insignificant Montchevreuil, Saint-Simon himself mentions him as one of the witnesses to her secret marriage with Louis XIV. She wanted to secure the silence of a compromising confidant, allege her enemies; she had nothing to conceal, retort her supporters. Her own niece, a Villette, who became Madame de Caylus and who was not over friendly to her aunt, alludes to Villarceaux, expresses her belief in Madame de Maintenon's virtue, but cannot refrain from telling the anecdote of a lady who said to her husband on a similar occasion: "How do you manage to be so very sure of such things?"[3] Villarceaux behaved badly; he had a mythological portrait painted of Madame Scarron, which she probably never saw, but which still exists.[4]

The truth seems to be that no serious blame ever fell on the conduct of the beautiful young woman, who was exposed to uncommon danger and surrounded by slanderers, the worst of whom was her own brother. It is noteworthy that Bussy-Rabutin, the most venomous tongue in France, speaks of Madame Scarron's honesty and virtue: "I am persuaded," he says, "that the

[1] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, pp. 138, 133–142.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Corresp. authentique*, i. Intr. p. xvii., pp. 18, 155; Saint Simon, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 108–112.

[3] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 123.

[4] Catalogue of the Gallery at Buda-Pesth; Morillot, *Scarron*, pp. 111–112.

corruption of the Court will never spoil her." Abbé de Choisy is no less emphatic about her; he calls moderation her distinct quality, and thinks her incapable of ever sacrificing her personal dignity and sense of duty to worldly motives.

On October 7, 1660, death released poor Scarron from his sufferings. "He talked for forty years without having anything to say," was the summing up of his literary work by his colleague, Cyrano de Bergerac. Posterity is more equitable, and praises him as one of the best representatives of burlesque poetry. His irreligious moods were as frivolous as his verses and did not prevail at the end. His last moments are described as edifying. The epitaph which he composed for himself is touching and unforgotten:

> "Passants, ne faites pas de bruit,
> Et gardez-vous qu'il ne s'éveille;
> Car voici la première nuit
> Que le pauvre Scarron sommeille."

He had left to his wife everything he possessed, but there was not even sufficient money to pay for his funeral. Creditors seized his furniture, which friends had enriched with works of art, and his widow took refuge in a convent.[1] Her aunt and uncle Villette, with whom she was on the most affectionate terms, inquired anxiously about the state of her affairs, and received the melancholy answer: "To tell the truth, my condition is so deplorable that I want to spare your feelings by avoiding painful details. Monsieur Scarron left ten thousand francs in assets, and his debts amount to twenty-two thousand francs. Twenty-three thousand francs are settled on me by marriage contract. But the deed was drawn up so badly that, although my claim stands first, the only advantage which I derive from it is that I shall have to pay the greater part to his creditors. After having recourse

[1] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, pp. 93, 100–111, Appendix I.

to law, I shall probably save four or five thousand francs. This is my inheritance from the poor man, whose head was full of chimeras, and who spent every farthing in his possession while waiting for the discovery of the alchemist's stone or some other equally probable event. . . . I am not destined to be happy; among us pious people we call these things visitations of the Lord, and in great resignation we lay them down at the foot of the Cross."[1]

Yet the question how to live had to be solved. Fouquet, who had again proved helpful, disappeared for ever in the catastrophe of 1661; Mazarin was dead; Louis XIV. reigned. The godmother of Françoise d'Aubigné, who, in 1652, had married the Marshal Duc de Navailles, Madame de Motteville, a good and wise woman, the author of excellent Memoirs, the wives of d'Albret and of Montausier, interceded on behalf of Madame Scarron with the Queen-mother.[2] The pension which had been restored to her husband was granted to his widow. It was sanctioned in 1666 by Louis XIV., a few weeks after the death of his mother, and with the obliging words that the King remembered the services rendered by Agrippa d'Aubigné to his grandfather Henri IV.[3] This was no doubt the first time Louis XIV. ever heard the name of Madame Scarron. For her moderate needs the sum of two thousand livres proved more than sufficient. Out of it she paid a regular allowance to her brother, helped the poor, and, like other ladies of limited means, resided chiefly in convents, where she occupied private lodgings.[4] The faithful servant who attended her, Nanon Balbien, a person of some education, lived long enough to be courted by the

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 88, 91.
[2] Geffroy, *Corresp. authentique*, i. p. 181.
[3] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, &c., pp. 130–132; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance génerale*, i. p. 112.
[4] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, pp. 114–115.

highest dignitaries of Versailles.[1] Friends continued to visit Scarron's widow. From time to time she stayed with them, but never accepted presents, nor gave up her independent existence. At the Hôtel d'Albret she often met the young wife of the Marshal's nephew, Athenaïs de Rochechouart, Marquise de Montespan, who grew very fond of her. She was twenty years old, and still of blameless reputation. The King's mistress was Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who was raised to the rank of a duchess in 1667, and followed her royal lover to the army in Flanders. Madame de Montespan, when she heard of it, said, "May God preserve me from ever being the mistress of the King, but if I were, I would feel ashamed of myself in the presence of the Queen."[2] At the Hôtel de Richelieu, Madame Scarron met another lady destined to play an important part in her future life. It was Mademoiselle de Chalais, who is known to history as la Princesse des Ursins.[3] When Mademoiselle de Nemours left for Portugal to marry King Alphonso VII., she was advised to take Madame Scarron with her, but met with a refusal. Madame Scarron led an existence which made her thoroughly happy.[4] She grievously disappointed the curiosity of well-wishers and scandal-mongers alike, who expected a love affair or an adventure. She never had either one or the other, and she states her reasons.

Her virtue was backed by a predominant feature in her character, which proved stronger than all the allurements of temptation. She loved above all things to be honoured, she liked to be respected and to enjoy

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iii. pp. 168, 545.

[2] Pierre Clément, *Madame de Montespan;* Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. p. 122; Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres hist. et édifiantes*, ii. p. 460.

[3] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, p. 139; Madame de Maintenon et Princesse des Ursins, *Correspondances*, 1701–1714.

[4] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 65; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, i. p. 31.

consideration. The sympathies of all men seemed more desirable to her than the exclusive affection of one. To acquire merit, and to be praised for it, this was what she herself calls "her folly and her idol."[1] She nursed victims of smallpox, "partly because she pitied them, chiefly because she wanted to do something which, being extraordinary, would be praised." She swallowed a newly discovered drug which was considered extremely dangerous, simply to show how plucky she was. She shared all the troubles and cares of her friends, presided over the household of Madame de Montchevreuil, and looked after a crippled child while the mother was kept in bed by ill-health or confinements. She used to work at her tapestry, even when travelling about in the big coaches, which in those days were the only mode of conveyance, and embroidered in that way a whole set of furniture for a friend. The sixth morning hour never "found her in bed," she says, and often did she wish in after days that she had done for God the many tasks which she inflicted upon herself for the sake of vainglory.[2]

Although she was very fond of society and of the pleasures of conversation, she made it a rule to frequent honest women who were "not amusing," nor, as it seems, difficult to find. One of them was Madame de Montchevreuil, whose dulness was proverbial. With regard to others, Madame Scarron was not always happy in her choice. Madame d'Heudicourt, a very clever woman, whose marriage she had helped to arrange, soon after did so much mischief at Court by her treasonable intrigues that she was exiled by the King.[3] He subsequently pardoned

[1] Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres hist. et édifiantes*, ii. p. 221; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 21, 23.

[2] Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 21–22, 23.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 108–109, 152–155, 408; Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 79, 195–196; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, pp. 425–428.

her, and Madame de Maintenon, who saw much of her, could not help being amused by her witty conversation. "I should certainly not like to have any utterances of Madame d'Heudicourt attributed to me," was her cautious remark about this most untrustworthy lady. Saint-Simon calls her "the wicked fairy, the bad angel of Madame de Maintenon," who bore patiently with her and assisted her on her deathbed.[1] Madame Scarron had compensations; Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné, delighted in her intercourse, and remained her friend. The classic of letter-writers, who describes herself as throwing the bridle on the neck of her pen, was not in the habit of sparing anybody whenever there was a good story to tell, yet she never varied in her appreciation of Madame Scarron. Their natures differed as much as their minds harmonised. The intellectual fireworks of the incomparable Marquise pleased, but evidently did not dazzle, the self-restrained granddaughter of Agrippa d'Aubigné, who had inherited from him remarkable literary gifts, if no brilliancy.

An undercurrent of sadness, the inevitable result of painful experiences, was not entirely veiled by her cheerfulness and good-temper, and touched the generous heart of Madame de Sévigné. Madame Scarron, who adored children, never enjoyed the love of a mother, a husband, or a child. At the age of twenty-five, when her widowhood began, her habits indicated the sort of life she had chosen for herself. She wore fine linen and burnt candles, which were a luxury in those days, but the material of her dress was of the simplest kind.[2] One day, at the wedding of Madame d'Heudicourt, Madame de Montespan found her "dressed like a servant"; she hardly knew

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iii. pp. 213–221; xvii. pp. 64–66, 69.
[2] Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 23; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, i. p. 52 *ff.*; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, pp. 114, 115.

her again after she had been hastily attired for the ceremony, at which the Court was present.[1]

Religion had little or nothing to do with this show of austerity. Madame Scarron was always a pious-minded woman, but the early impressions with which Calvinism had stamped her soul proved lasting. For years a Catholicism which had been more or less forced on her did not attract her. She went to mass out of regard for public opinion, but she herself preferred the evening service, at which psalms were sung. Then, slowly, a change came over her and made her long for the blessings of a seriously pious life. From the moment she resolved to embrace it she did so in the sober, self-collected way which is characteristic of her. Yet her inner development cannot be explained without reference to the religious revival, which is the great event of the days of her youth and of the history of France in the seventeenth century.

[1] Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres hist. et edifiantes*, ii. p. 460.

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS REFORM IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE sixteenth century in France closed with the defeat of Calvinism. As late as 1560 half the nation professed the creed of Calvin; one generation later the majority of the nation had returned to the Roman Catholic faith—chiefly for political reasons. To patriots, the Reformation became hateful and the religious schism threatened the unity of the State. Epicureans like Montaigne, who took good care that his orthodoxy should prove unassailable while his morals were pagan; stoics of the type of Charon or Du Vair, who strove after a wisdom not dependent upon Christian morality, found hardly any difference between Calvinism and anarchy. They rejected both. Politicians did not feel the need of religious enthusiasm. Christians could not live without it.[1]

The Church rose to the occasion; congregations of secular priests, convents for both sexes, were called into existence. But who was to inspire the laity? The problem was solved by François de Sales, a nobleman born in Savoy, 1567.[2] At an early age he had left his ancestral home and become a priest and subsequently titular Bishop of Geneva, the stronghold of Calvinism. He never resided there, but spent his life chiefly at

[1] Wetzer und Welte, *Kirchenlexikon;* Hauk, *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche;* Hergenröther, *Handbuch der allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte; Cambridge Modern History*, vol. v. pp. 780–785 (Bibliographies for Religious History in the Seventeenth Century).

[2] St. François de Sales, *Œuvres;* F. Strowsky, *Saint François de Sales*, pp. 111, 115–116, 121, 134–135.

Annecy, and took his share in the work of conversion which was carried on under the armed protection of the Duke of Savoy. The mildness of the Bishop's disposition, his intercourse with leading Calvinists, bore better fruit than coercion. The qualities which distinguished him from his fellow-workers were his peculiar charm of manner, his gift of sympathy, and his wonderful comprehension of human needs and troubles. His insight with regard to them amounted to clairvoyance, his charity was unlimited. In the year 1602 François de Sales came to Paris. He did not fail to see that the interest in mere controversy was exhausted, that neither mysticism nor asceticism, as practised in the cloister, appealed any more to the hearts of men who longed for the solid gifts of a piety suited to their needs. Daily life, simple duties, had to be sanctified. Better good deeds than ecstasies! François de Sales became the founder of a religious community, which his penitent, Madame de Chantal, the grandmother of Madame de Sévigné, guided on the old lines of monastic perfection. But the saintly Bishop's favourite type of Christian virtue is that of the world. In his charming little book, dedicated to an ideal "Philothea," he gives precepts how to lead a simple, useful, pious life. The test of Philothea's faith is love and practical-minded, enlightened charity, which respects in every soul a distinct personality, "a world of its own." As a writer, the Bishop of Geneva has left his mark on French prose, and experts in psychology acknowledge their debt to him.[1] On similar lines and with equal success, his friends, the Cardinal de Bérulle and Monsieur Olier, reformed the secular clergy and prepared the priesthood for missionary work. Le Boutillier de Rancé, a distinguished layman, who had drained the cup of pleasure and ambition, opened the solitude of

[1] F. Strowsky, *Saint François de Sales*, Introduction.

La Trappe to those who, like himself, had experienced the bitterness of barren remorse. "This is the work of grace," exclaimed Schopenhauer, a prophet of negation, while looking at the portrait of Rancé.

Last, not least, "Monsieur Vincent," the spiritual father of the sisters of charity, sent the most efficient and devoted workers to the hospital, the poor-house, and the foundlings. He too warned his sisterhood that inevitable decay would follow should they yield to the temptation of adopting the rules of conventual life.[1]

Another religious experience has become part of French history. At Paris there lived a time-honoured family of parliamentarians and servants of the State, the Arnaulds. They had been Calvinists, and were highly gifted men and women. Arnauld, the father, who had a large family, compelled two of his daughters, then mere children, to enter the Order of Bernhardine nuns because Henri IV. had promised to promote them to the dignity of abbesses. The King kept his word, and in 1602 Arnauld's eldest daughter became Abbess of Port-Royal, a monastery near Versailles. She was not eleven years old and took the name of Mère Angélique, under which she became famous. For years she revolted against her fate, and passed through a severe inner crisis before she resolved to become a nun in good earnest and to reform her community. The day came when she refused her own father admittance within the precincts of the monastery, but she fainted away when his anger melted and she saw him in tears.

For a time St. François de Sales became her spiritual adviser, and moderated her austerity with wise and prudent discretion. She even thought of leaving her order and entering the one which he had founded.[2] Fifteen years after his death she

[1] E. Dejean, "Le Diocèse d'Alet sous Pavillon," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, févr. 1909, p. 391.

[2] F. Strowsky, *Saint François de Sales*, pp. 211, 355–356; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 206.

became acquainted with Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran, who somewhat reluctantly consented to take charge of Port-Royal. Saint-Cyran, then fifty-five years old, was an austere and very learned divine, who, together with his intimate friend Cornelius Jansen, professor of theology at Louvain, had devoted his life to the study of St. Augustine. They adopted his doctrine on grace and predestination, and they and their disciples never ceased to defend their orthodoxy on the ground that it could not be impugned without passing condemnation on the teaching of St. Augustine and of St. Paul himself.

In its unmitigated harshness this doctrine sounds terrible. God does not intend that all men should be saved. Christ did not die for all men. Salvation is for the small number of elect only; it is the work of grace, and grace is independent of the co-operation of the souls to whom it is given. The fall of man has not merely weakened the inclination and the will for what is right and good; it has destroyed it. According to this doctrine of unconditional predestination, all good intentions and works are in truth but operations of the grace of God in the human soul. Every claim to personal merit ceases to exist. Saint-Cyran goes so far as to sanction the belief that children who die without being baptized are condemned, not only to hell, but even to mitigated torture in hell. In practice he and his disciples escaped from the thraldom of the theory by working for the salvation of souls.[1] Although the connection of Saint-Cyran with Port-Royal was of short duration, its effects proved lasting. His precept, to avoid the great and to share everything with the poor, was obeyed to the letter. There is no trace of undue severity in the advice he gave to his community to beware of eccentricities, to lead

[1] Pater Odilo Rottmanner, O.S.B., *Der Augustinismus, Eine dogmengeschichtliche Studie*, pp. 18–27.

humble and simple lives, to put their trust, not in men, but in Jesus Christ. It was due to him if this convent of nuns gave heroic examples of self-sacrifice and moral elevation. Nor did Saint-Cyran limit himself to controversy. His object was to recall Christianity and the Church to the purity of primitive ages. The Gallican theory about State rights in ecclesiastical matters seemed to him incompatible with Episcopacy as a divine institution. He insisted on the free election of bishops, whereas the Concordate of 1516 had deprived the cathedral chapters of the right of nomination in favour of the Crown and in return for pecuniary advantages to Rome. Another consequence of this view of the episcopal office and its sacred character was the opposition of Saint-Cyran to the preponderating influence of religious orders in the government of the Church.

Cardinal Richelieu ruled over France, and may be said to have held moderate Gallican views; yet he tolerated no opposition, either in Church or in State. He discerned the superiority of Saint-Cyran, and tried to win his allegiance by the offer of a bishopric. Saint-Cyran refused, and both he and Jansen disagreed with the all-powerful minister in ecclesiastical matters as well as in politics. In 1638 Richelieu sent his French antagonist to Vincennes. During Saint-Cyran's imprisonment, Jansen, who shortly before had become Bishop of Ypres, died there in 1638. Two years later his posthumous work, the famous *Augustinus*, appeared in three folios. Jansen had submitted it to the authority of the Holy See. This unconditional obedience to the Pope, as well as the doctrine he held with regard to Sacramental grace and the Eucharist, would alone have separated him from Calvinism, which he and his disciples never ceased violently to attack. They did so with the greater zeal when they were accused of harbouring some

of Calvin's doctrines. Saint-Cyran took no active part in the theological strife to which *Augustinus* gave rise. He died in 1643, shortly after Richelieu, whose death had restored him to liberty. His influence survived, however, and proved so strong that Port-Royal became the centre of a religious revival. Priests and laymen, conspicuous alike for their mental gifts and their piety, settled in the valley in which the monastery stood. They led retired lives, isolated from each other, and were known as "the anchorites." Their days were spent in prayer, study, and manual work, or in the cultivation of the gardens and fields of the abbey. Some of these men took to teaching, and opened schools which have remained famous in the history of education. The soul of the community was Angélique Arnauld. Eighteen members of her family, a whole dynasty, congregated round this extraordinary woman. Her own mother took the veil after the death of her husband, and submitted to her daughter's rule. Her youngest son, Antoine, known as the great Arnauld, acquired a world-wide fame in defence of the Catholic faith and of the teaching of Saint-Cyran, for which he suffered exile and persecution. Young men gave up brilliant expectations and devoted themselves to the service of God. Great ladies, some of them of royal descent, built little houses for themselves close to the monastery, where they spent most of their days in repentance and good works. The spiritual influence of Port-Royal proved so irresistible that there is no great name among the illustrious representatives of the age of Louis XIV. who did not testify to it. The young King himself is said to have exclaimed, "I wish I were converted; I would give an arm for such a grace." Balzac, Corneille, Domat, Jean Racine, the pupil *par excellence* of Port-Royal, Le Nain de Tillemont, the model of a Christian priest and scholar, Boileau, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Daguesseau,

Saint-Simon, and in later days, historians like Rollin, preachers like Massillon were, if not actually disciples, at least admirers, friends, or apologists of Port-Royal. Leibniz praised and loved it. Bossuet, when he died, was suspected of favouring its opinions; in the ranks of the Curia Popes met with its defenders, among whom were the Cardinals de Lugo, Noris and Casanata.[1] The King of France met Jansenists among his courtiers, his ministers and his prelates. The most saintly and venerated bishops, Caulet of Pamiers, Pavillon of Alet, whose authority and virtue nobody dared to question, were staunch friends of Port-Royal and stood up in defence of its orthodoxy. When Voltaire speaks of this convent his tone becomes serious and even reverential, and he calls the moral treatise of Nicole, one of its wisest and most prominent teachers, unparalleled of its kind.

It was unavoidable that such extraordinary results should provoke contradiction; injured interests spoke with the tongue of religious zeal; "Jansenism" became a term of obloquy, inflicted alike on envied rivals and on theological opponents; no difference was made between the supporters of a particular doctrine and the moral results of their practical teaching.

Arnauld was the first to proclaim that it meant nothing less than a reaction of the Catholic conscience against lowering the religious ideal by a lax and corrupt morality.

In 1643, before the death of Saint-Cyran and with his approval, Arnauld published his book on *Frequent Communion*. He upheld both the teaching and the practice of the Church, but he insisted on the necessity of approaching the sacrament with sincere contrition. Arnauld scorned compromise with the fashionable but by no means new code of casuistic morals known as Probabilism or Molinism, as it was sometimes called,

[1] *E.g.* Pélissier, *Le Cardinal Henri de Noris et sa Correspondance.*

after one of its chief promoters, the Jesuit Molina, although it was a Dominican who invented it. This theory made morals smooth and salvation easy. Casuists, not conscience and the law of God, decided that penitents might not scruple to obey in doubtful cases. Probabilism proved useful to the Jesuits as confessors of the great and was congenial to their spirit of dominion. Nevertheless, there were Jesuits who opposed it. One of them, Cardinal de Lugo, stood up for Arnauld at Rome, and Bourdaloue, one of the greatest masters of eloquence in the French pulpit, never advocated casuistic morals when preaching before the King. Gonzalez, the general of the Order, wrote a treatise against Probabilism, but met with such violent opposition within the Society that both he and the Pope, who supported him, failed to remove the stigma from its teaching. Arnauld's book received the approbation of bishops and was loudly welcomed by the public at large. Like Saint-Cyran himself, he was an ardent defender of the Catholic faith and an authority in the Church. Opponents could only challenge him by directing their attacks against the one particular doctrine with which Jansenism had been identified.

In 1642 Urban VIII. had confirmed the sentences of his predecessors against predestination; Jansenism had been mentioned in general terms, and this was considered insufficient. In 1652 many French bishops and theologians of the Sorbonne insisted at Rome on the necessity of condemning the more extreme propositions in the treatise *Augustinus*.

Innocent X. hesitated before coming to a decision in so delicate a matter, which involved the teaching of a father of the Church. Finally he did condemn five of these propositions, and it may be safely asserted that, by so doing, he delivered the Christian conscience from a well-nigh intolerable burden. Nor

did the Jansenists attempt to defend the five propositions; they merely maintained that they were not to be found in the folios of Jansen, and thereby they started the famous question *de droit et de fait*, which proved fatal to them in the end, as such a distinction was untenable.

The actual words quoted in the papal decree were not in the text of the treatise, but, according to Bossuet himself, whose efforts made for peace, they were "the soul of the book."

When this happened, the Fronde had rebelled against the King and been defeated. Mazarin was again master in France. He cared for politics, not for theology. Port-Royal had suffered severely by the civil war, and had remained loyal to the Crown throughout. But Pierre de Gondy, Cardinal de Retz, a clever intriguer and unworthy priest, who was the real head of the rebellion, had found it expedient to connect himself with the Jansenists.[1] During his exile, when he became by right of succession Archbishop of Paris, Mazarin and the Court wanted to deprive him of his see. The Jansenists felt bound to defend his episcopal rights. Religious reform might pave the way to political resistance. The Court and Mazarin turned against Port-Royal. Its schools were suppressed, its material interests injured; Arnauld, censured by the Sorbonne, was forbidden to vindicate his position and condemned when he broke silence.

Odious open and anonymous attacks were directed against "the Jansenist sect," whose popularity increased in proportion to the unfairness and the violence of its oppressors. It was at this moment that an avenger arose.

Blaise Pascal had acquired fame as an inventor, and was a mathematician who competed with Descartes at an age when others have hardly left school.[2] Until

[1] Chantelauze, *Le Cardinal de Retz et la Fronde.*

[2] *Grands Écrivains de la France—Pascal,* Ed. Brunschwigg; Lord Saint-Cyres, *Pascal;* Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal;* H. Reuchlin, *Geschichte von Port-Royal.*

1655 his life, though blameless enough, had been that of a scholarly man of the world. At thirty-three years of age, the date of his final conversion, he became a servant of the poor, and renounced, not only all personal advantages, but the pursuit of science itself. The influence of the spiritual advisers of Port-Royal, where one of his sisters was a nun, contributed to this result; Pascal always ascribed it chiefly to an inner religious experience, which he kept secret, but which became known after his death. He led a retired life in Paris at the time when his Jansenist friends were threatened with their very existence. In 1656 the world had a surprise. Under an assumed authorship, Letters to a friend in the provinces, the so-called *Provinciales*, took the public by storm. Under the touch of genius French prose was enriched by a masterpiece which gave the controversy between churchmen an interpretation of universal importance. Five letters out of eighteen deal with the suspected doctrines, thirteen letters are directed against the moral teaching, quoted chiefly from the books of Escobar, one of the worst of Jesuist casuists. The deadly fight, once begun, was directed against the Jesuits, not because they were the only culprits, but because they were the most powerful. Pascal does not accuse his opponents of any intention to undermine Christian morals. He limits himself to the proof that it is not their chief aim to uphold them in their purity, "because this would be bad policy." The majority are bound by the severe precepts of the gospel; a small number may evade them "because the important thing is to govern."[1] Therein lies the condemnation of a system which adapts itself to circumstances. For many years afterwards, and notwithstanding Pascal, honourable men and Jesuit priests, such as Annat, Ferrier and La Chaize, the

[1] Pascal, *Les Provinciales*, lettre iv.; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. pp. 51, 74, 121–127, 265; v. p. 40.

confessors of Louis XIV., did not alter their tactics; they shut their eyes to the scandals of the King's private life, while they tolerated his erroneous views about religion, which served their purpose. The *Provinciales* denounce, not only calumniators and persecutors, but men who approve or are too weak to protest. They are loud in praise of the victims, of Jansenius, whose tomb stood desecrated, of Saint-Cyran, whose memory was vilified, of Arnauld, whose voice was silenced. They recall the labours of these men in defence of Catholic truth, their humble submission to the Church, their saintly lives. Pascal appeals from the injustice of men to the judgment of God: "Ad tuum, domine Jesu, tribunal appello."

It proved ineffectual for the "little Letters" to be burnt at Paris and put on the Index at Rome. There came the time when a Pope, Innocent XII., condemned the teaching of Jesuit casuists, "ces ordures," as Bossuet calls them,[1] and when the assembly of the French clergy repudiated them again and again.

As early as 1656 the battle fought on these grounds had to be given up as lost. The beaten army changed front, and renewed its attacks against the doctrinal errors of Jansenism. Formularies of faith were drawn up, and even the nuns of Port-Royal had to sign them. Those who refused to do so were deprived of the sacraments, exiled and imprisoned. "It is not for nuns to defend the truth, but to die for it," said one of them, the sister of Pascal,[2] after having been induced to yield; she died broken-hearted a few weeks later. La Grand Mère Angélique had passed away at the beginning of the crisis. To the last she stood up for the purity of the faith of her community,

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 67; *Bossuet à Rancé*, 1682; T. N. Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 93; Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, i. p. 117; Döllinger-Reusch, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten*, Probabilismus.

[2] Victor Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal.*

and gave the example, not only of fortitude, but of moderation and of cheerfulness. "Nothing but things eternal ought to frighten us," were her last words. The King had to apply to the Pope, in order to coerce bishops into submission. The Nuncio altered or suppressed documents before bishops Pavillon of Alet gave up resistance. At last this deplorable state of affairs led to a compromise, which is known as the "Peace of the Church." French bishops negotiated with Clement IX., who granted it in 1668. Arnauld agreed to concessions which Pascal would have found insincere. The contending parties promised to desist from further discussions; Port-Royal obtained a respite which lasted ten years.

In 1662 Pascal had died "with the simple faith of a child," after years of retirement and austerity.

In 1670 his spiritual testament, the *Pensées*, was published. The *Pensées* are fragments of a work intended to be one of the grandest apologies for the Christian faith; to the present day unceasing efforts to trace the original plan have failed; moreover, many arguments which were convincing to contemporaries have lost their value for us. Yet the *Pensées* will never become obsolete, for the object of these meditations is man, and the insight of Pascal into the mystery of his being is unsurpassed.

In the *Provinciales* there are traces of the scientific work which made their author famous. After the condemnation of Galileo in 1650, Descartes had suppressed his *Traité du Monde*. The seventeenth letter contains the well-known sentence: "Proof that the earth does not move is still wanting. If further investigations should demonstrate that the earth does move, all mankind won't prevent it from doing so, nor will they prevent themselves from turning round with it."[1]

[1] A. Fouillée, *Descartes*, pp. 15, 62–63, 174 ff.; F. Brunetière, *Études critiques*, iv. p. 133.

In the *Pensées*, too, there are flashes of light of this nature. Pascal could not cease to be himself. But exact science and abstract thought as such no longer interested him. He states his reason: "When I began the study of man, I came to understand that these abstract sciences are not for him, *ne lui sont pas propres*, and that, while I became absorbed in them, I got farther away from my destination than those who knew nothing about them." From that moment he devoted his exceptional gifts to religious problems.

"The discoveries of men increase and multiply from one age to another; the good and evil in the world remain the same." Within her pale "justice is a mere fashion," "might reigns supreme," "usurpation is the foundation of property," "mutual hatred is the natural order." Enclosed within two infinites, incapable of finding out causes or discerning aims, a slave of passions, a victim of force, a tool of error, selfish, cruel, hypocritical, and withal futile enough to deceive himself with miserable pastimes, such is man after the deliberate choice which made him exchange a condition of innocence and bliss for one of misery and of sin. His very guilt explains his state to the religious consciousness; without his guilt he would remain an insoluble riddle to the sceptic as well as to the Christian, whose notion of sin leads to the necessity of redemption, to revealed truth, and thereby to the acceptance of a divine law. There is no possibility of escape from the terrible dilemma which compels man either to live as if eternity were non-existent, as if this world of appearances were sufficient for his needs, or to accept the dogmas of faith.

The choice of Pascal is unhesitating. "Archimedes in tears embraces the cross"; "Jesus Christ is a God whom we approach without pride, and to whom we submit without despair." In the light of

this conception, man ceases to be despicable—"a reed indeed, but a reed which thinks: all the celestial bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth and her kingdoms, are not worth as much as the lowest spirit . . . all the bodies, all the spirits and their creations, are not worth one aspiration of love."

This apology for the Christian faith culminates in one immortal song of love. "The sole and unique object of Holy Writ is love. . . . Truth without love is not from God, it is an idol—*Dieu sensible au cœur*." And again: "*Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison n'a pas.*"

Every attempt to deal with the history of the age of Louis XIV. would be doomed to failure if it did not allude, be it ever so shortly, to the religious forces which pervaded not merely social life, but the whole intellectual atmosphere of the time.

The expression of a society is its literature. This celebrated axiom holds good if applied to French classicism. Its ideal types were no mere creations of fancy; they were living realities, immortalised by art.

Even Molière, the one great genius who stands aloof in the century, remembered the *Provinciales* when he unmasked hypocrisy and called it "Tartuffe." Tradition attributes the famous line of the drama—

"Il est de faux dévots ainsi que de faux braves,"

to the great Condé himself,[1] and *Tartuffe* was applauded by the King. Racine is inseparable from the inspiration of Port-Royal. "Phädra," the victim of fatality, is but human nature unredeemed by grace and perishing under the sting of her shame. In *Polyeucte* Corneille had the vision of faith triumphant in death, and the love which conquers the

[1] Coquelin aîné, "Don Juan, ou le Festin de Pierre," *Revue bleue*, 1891.

soul of Pauline is of the heroic type sanctified by martyrdom for truth.

The tribute of poetry was worthy of the doctrine which inspired it, and of the religious enthusiasts who received its message.

Among those who lived in their midst but did not join them was Françoise d'Aubigné, the widow of Scarron. She belonged to the small group of distinguished men and women who were not attracted by the greatest religious revival witnessed since the Reformation.

There are distinct signs that, even in those days, her mental attitude was hostile to Jansenism. The only tribute she ever paid to Pascal, whose name she never mentions, was her aversion for the Jesuits.

CHAPTER IV

MADAME DE MAINTENON

UNTIL 1674 the letters of Madame Scarron are few and far between. She had reached middle life, the period when the mind is most active and the heart most easily touched. Yet she reveals nothing about her inner self, and all her utterances regarding that period are of a later date. They assert most positively that in religious matters she was averse to "all novelties, be their merit ever so great," and that she sought refuge "in a simple faith." She says: "This was the part I chose for myself in my youth and in intercourse with the greatest minds, who constantly debated such questions in my presence. I noticed the enmities and the violence which attended those disputes, and I promised myself never to side with either party, should I ever become a pious person. For it did not seem worth while to me to lead a pious life and then to expose myself to eternal reprobation through the hatred and pride, generated by this spirit of cabal. It is said of those of my sex who belong to the cabal: 'This woman is above mediocrity.' As if the gospel ever taught a superior and peculiar kind of piety." Jansenism at its worst was better than that, and Jansenism without enthusiasm was no Jansenism at all.

In 1666 very few people in France, perhaps not even Madame Scarron herself, were capable of so cool a reasoning. At the time when Louis XIV. called her *Votre solidité*, her name was Madame de

Maintenon, and the words quoted above have the ring of old age. Yet her conduct as a widow shows that she was sincere. She had resolved to lead a more strictly religious life; one of the practices of Catholic devotion was to choose priests who were not necessarily confessors of their penitents, but who directed their conduct in all matters of importance. Madame Scarron's choice fell on a member of the congregation of Saint-Sulpice, which sided neither with the Jesuits nor the Jansenists. His name was Abbé Gobelin; he had been a soldier, and had the reputation of great learning and piety. From 1666 until his death in 1690, he acted as her spiritual adviser, and spent his life in obscurity. The title of Almoner to the King was the only distinction he ever accepted.[1] He showed discernment in detecting a certain amount of coquetry under the assumed simplicity of Madame Scarron: "My very honoured lady," he said to her one day, "you wear nothing but wool; but when you kneel before me, these stuffs fall in such graceful folds over your feet that, somehow, I think it too perfect." He also advised her not to shine in conversation, not to amuse others by her wit, and her friends noticed that she had become silent. Long ago she had given up all desire to attract by her beauty; she kept her bosom so persistently covered that people were afraid she was concealing a deformity, but one hot summer's day the Duchesse de Richelieu caught sight of it by chance and was fully reassured. Her devotions became more regular. On the days when she approached the sacraments she spent her time in seclusion. The books which she read for edification were the *Confessions of Saint Augustine*, the writings of Saint François de Sales, of Bossuet, and later those of Fénélon, the *Letters*

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. p. 196, note 1; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 113.

CALIFORNIA

LOUIS XIV.

of Saint Theresa, the *Imitation of Christ*, and the Psalms.[1] As it was her duty to lead an active, not a contemplative life, she avoided exaggeration; narrow-minded, petty devotional practices were distasteful to her; she did not tolerate them when she herself came to guide and instruct others.

She continued leading the retired life which was in accordance with her limited means, but she frequented as before the society of her friends.

A fragment of an otherwise lost letter to Madame de Villarceaux gives her first impression of Louis XIV. On August 26, 1660, she had witnessed his triumphal entry into Paris after his marriage with Maria Theresa, Infanta of Spain: "It is impossible," writes Madame Scarron, "to imagine anything more magnificent. . . . The Queen must have gone to bed yesterday evening well pleased with the husband of her choice." In the cortège she recognised Beuvron, Navailles, Guiche, and last but not least, Villarceaux; she described to his wife how well he managed his splendid horse, how smart he looked, and how people greeted him on his way.

From 1661 all the world knew that the King was passionately in love with Mademoiselle de la Vallière. She was lady-in-waiting to Henrietta, first Duchess of Orleans, to whose charms Louis XIV. was also not insensible. He was not faithful to his new mistress, but his feelings for her were sincere. Although she never wished to shine and felt acutely the shame of her position, her royal lover made her the centre of public ovations and festivities. He danced in ballets and rode *carrousels* organised in her honour; he appeared as Apollo in the chariot of the sun, which became his emblem; he dazzled Europe by the unheard of magnificence of his Court, he lavished

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. Introduction, xxx. pp. 38, 64 (*Projet de conduite*).

honours on the lady of his heart and made her a duchess.

The Queen, a devoted wife and a very stupid woman, who was slow to find out what was going on under her very eyes, was anonymously informed that she had a rival, and she found hearts that proved faithful to her. Monsieur de Navailles and his wife, Madame Scarron's relative, preferred to leave the Court rather than disgrace themselves by seeming to countenance the King's conduct. Their example found no imitators.[1]

Madame Scarron must have been among the first who knew that Madame de Montespan had taken the place of Madame de la Vallière as Louis XIV.'s mistress. Biographers assert that the double adultery dates from July 1667; it became public a year later.

The Marquise had a son by her husband, who resented his dishonour. He gave serious trouble, and the King, who was afraid that Montespan would claim his wife's children, had recourse to illegal means of repression in order to get rid of what he called "the extravagances" of Montespan.[2] His cousin, d'Albret, behaved like a courtier; the salons of the Hôtel d'Albret remained open to the Marquise, and its inmates went on seeing her. One of them was Madame Scarron. This state of things came to an end after d'Albret had been nominated governor of Guyenne.[3]

Madame de la Vallière was still present at Court. She had repeatedly tried to fly from the King, whose tears and supplications brought her back, She, who still loved him, then underwent a slow martyrdom from his increasing neglect and the cruel insolence of her

[1] V. Cousin, *La Société française au XVII. Siècle*, p. 48.
[2] Pierre Clément, *Madame de Montespan*, pp. 16, 14–22.
[3] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, pp. 144, 146; Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 26–34.

triumphant rival, which she suffered with meek resignation. Madame de Montespan differed from her in every way. She was proud, ambitious, bad-tempered, and exceedingly witty; her intelligence was as brilliant as her beauty; "l'esprit des Mortemart" was proverbial. Her sister, the Abbess de Fontevrault, was also a most distinguished woman, who corresponded with Madame de Maintenon, knew Latin to perfection, and learnt sufficient Greek to read and to translate Plato.

In 1668 Madame de Montespan expected the birth of her first child from the King. She was in the greatest distress; nobody was in the secret but Madame d'Heudicourt, her confidant. Both ladies knew that Madame Scarron was most helpful and trustworthy, and that she loved children. Colbert and his wife had not considered it beneath their dignity to take charge of the offspring of Madame de la Vallière; now things were worse, as both parties were married. But then Madame Scarron was not the wife of a minister; she was a poor, isolated woman, who might be approached. They asked her whether she would take care of the child.

This proposal led to the slippery path of moral compromise. She hesitated, but did not refuse. She asked for time and consulted Abbé Gobelin. He did not think it wrong to hide the shame of a sinner and evidently put her conscience at ease.[1] The answer she gave appears to have been: "If the King is the father of the child, and if he orders me to do it, I will."[2]

The King commanded her to do so, and bound her to absolute secrecy. "This singular kind of distinction," she says, "was a source of endless worries to me.

[1] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 126.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 108–109; P. Clément, *Histoire de Colbert*, p. 462; Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 37; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 52–53.

I stood on a ladder and did the work of upholsterers and other artisans, because nobody was allowed to come in. I had to do everything alone, because the wet-nurses did nothing under the pretext that they were tired. Often I went on foot and in disguise from one to another, and carried a bundle of linen and provisions under my arm. And then, again, I spent nights with the children, when one of them was ill. They lived in a little house on the outskirts of Paris. Early in the morning I re-entered my lodgings through the back door, dressed and went out again by the front door, to go to the Hôtels d'Albret or Richelieu, in order that my circle of friends should not become suspicious of a secret. Nobody guessed why I became very thin. In this way God makes use of all things to carry out His plans and to lead us slowly to the goal which we do not foresee."[1]

Madame de Montespan provided Madame Scarron with work. Between 1669 and 1678 she became the mother of seven children, three of whom were alive in 1672. The harassing existence imposed on Madame de Maintenon was soon found impracticable. She retreated with her nursery to a house in the rue de Vaugirard, in an isolated part of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and became "invisible" to all who knew her.[2]

Madame de Montespan's first child, a little daughter, died in 1672, but in 1670 the Duc du Maine had been born: "I feel to my sorrow and regret that this child is not less dear to me than the one who died," Madame Scarron wrote to Abbé Gobelin. Du Maine always remained her favourite, whom she loved "to excess," and with a foolish love which she foresaw would end in sorrow.[3]

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 33–39.

[2] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, p. 146; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance generale*, i. p. 162.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 205–208.

Madame de Montespan never cared much for her children, three of whom died in infancy. She was very superstitious; one day when she was informed that a fire had broken out in their apartments, she merely remarked that fires were of good omen. Louis XIV., on the contrary, was a most tender and affectionate father. Of the six children born to him by the Queen, only one son, the unattractive Dauphin, survived. He became all the more attached to his illegitimate offspring. In 1671 Madame de Montespan followed her royal lover to Flanders for the campaign against Holland. She prided herself on being the monarch's reigning mistress, and had reasons of her own to make her shame public. He had intrigues with various other ladies, and a more serious but well-concealed love affair with the Princesse de Soubise. This hard and designing woman and her husband profited by the royal caprice, and enriched themselves and their family at the King's expense. Madame de Soubise managed to secure his friendship, in order to enter later on into Madame de Maintenon's society, and to win her by an ostentatious devotion to her and an outwardly correct attitude in religious matters.[1] Though very ambitious, she found it expedient not to boast of the favour she had received, and left it to Madame de Montespan to seek the light of day for hers. Madame Scarron went in her company to Saint-Germain, Fontainebleau and Versailles. To her own intense astonishment, she was asked one day to drive in one of the royal carriages. The King often met her in the apartments of the Marquise, but the first impression she made upon him was unfavourable: "I hated the Court," she says, "and, besides, the King did not

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, v. pp. 255–259; vii. p. 80; xv. pp. 12–16; app. 479; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 463; La Fare, *Mémoires*, p. 239.

like me (*ne me goutait pas*), and avoided me. He was afraid of finding a *bel esprit*, a person difficult to please and very fastidious in her taste."[1]

As concealment was no longer either desirable or possible, she returned to the society of her friends. Madame de Sévigné was delighted to have her back again. She saw her in the company of La Rochefoucauld and his friend, Madame de La Fayette. The Duke was the author of the famous *Maximes;* the Countess had written the *Princesse de Clèves*, and thereby created the first psychological novel. In this distinguished intellectual *milieu* they discussed "the horrible agitations" of an environment now well known to Madame Scarron, and the anxieties which even ladies like Madame de Montespan had to bear. "These discourses amuse us and carry us often very far, from morality to morality, sometimes Christian, sometimes political."[2] After one of these suppers, Madame de Sévigné used to take Madame Scarron back in her carriage to the mysterious house in its pleasant grounds, "where nobody is admitted. She has numerous servants and a coach, is richly but modestly attired, like one who lives with the great. She is amiable, beautiful, very good, and totally without pretentions."

Louvois had orders to pay the expenses of the establishment in the rue de Vaugirard. Not before 1672 did the King increase Madame Scarron's pension from livres to ducats, but in 1671 the insatiable d'Aubigné had already heard these significant words from his sister: "Our destinies will be undivided and less unfortunate than they were." Through Louvois she obtained his appointment as governor of a conquered town in Holland, where he disgraced himself by extortions but managed to escape punishment.

There are further traces of her successful exertions

[1] Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres hist. et edifiantes*, ii. p. 454.
[2] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 15 Déc. 1871, 16 Jan. 1672.

in favour of others. Her uncle and aunt, the Villettes, were both dead. She helped their son as much as lay in her power, but had to remind him, when he asked for nothing less than an embassy, that "she did not govern the State."[1]

In March 1673, while she was still in seclusion with Madame de Montespan's children, Madame de Sévigné's cousin, Madame de Coulanges, wrote confidentially to her about Madame Scarron: "At the house of one of her friends there is *a certain man* who finds her so amiable and such good company that he gets fretful whenever she is away. She seems more interested than ever in the affairs of her old friends. To them she devotes her spare time with such pleasure that they feel all the more sorry to see so little of her."[2]

Madame Scarron was the only person who shared the King's grief when his children, for whom she was responsible, fell ill or died. According to Madame de Caylus, he said on one such occasion: "She knows how to love; it would be a pleasure to be loved by her." But Madame de Caylus is not quite trustworthy, and such sayings are hardly ever true. Yet their common care and affection for these little ones was no doubt the first strong link between them.[3]

On December 20, 1673, Louis XIV. did the boldest thing ever attempted by a Christian monarch in civilised days. He legitimised his bastards by royal decree. The two surviving children of Madame de la Vallière and the two children of Madame de Montespan who were alive at the time thus received

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[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 153, 157, 161, 171, 185.

[2] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, iii. pp. 195, 196; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 43.

[3] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 40; Ezechiel Spanheim, *Relation de la Cour de France*, 1690, pp. 17-18.

royal honours. The edict was registered by the *Parlement*, and met with no opposition.

The King, a man of thirty-five, was the mightiest monarch in Europe, the only sovereign of a homogeneous, united State. Not only women and flatterers, but the admiration of the people proclaimed him the handsomest man in his kingdom. He was a splendid horseman and a brave soldier, though never a leader in the field. His voice was remarkably melodious; he sang and loved music and all the fine arts. He was naturally eloquent, and always chose the words best suited to the occasion. His manner was perfect, his attitude dignified and yet full of charm. He supplied the defects of his education, which had been strangely neglected, by sound common sense, by early experience in matters of State, by an extraordinary power for work, and by the insight he showed in the choice of his servants. His ministers were Colbert, Le Tellier and Lionne; his generals, Condé, Turenne and Luxembourg; his administrators, Vauban and Louvois. He was at the head of the strongest army in Europe, and his revenue exceeded that of any other monarch. His fleet at one time held the sea, and its commander, Duquesne, beat de Ruyter. His first war, the War of Devolution, for the dowry of the Queen, was not unjustifiable, and had been successful; he girded the French frontier with a ring of fortresses, and increased his territories by the conquest of Flanders. The period between the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1668, and the treaty of Nimeguen in 1678, represents the ascendency of France. Louis XIV. was triumphant. He was not yet blinded by success, and had not begun the wars of devastation which made his name odious and stirred the great alliances to rise in self-defence against him. The deplorable scandals of his private life did not diminish his popularity, and his religious training was of too

inferior a kind to disturb his conscience with more than passing twinges of remorse. The Court was brilliant—"like a fairy tale"; festivities in honour of the reigning mistress succeeded each other and were not wanting in intellectual refinement. The King protected Molière and applauded *Tartuffe*. His pleasures did not interfere with State affairs, neither did his campaigns interrupt the gaieties of his Court.

In those days there was no fighting during the winter season, and when Louis XIV. appeared at the head of his armies, the skill and the bravery of first-rate commanders had prepared his victories for him and the fall of besieged fortresses and towns. The Queen and the ladies of the Court followed him to Holland, Flanders, Alsace and Franche-Comté. Madame de Montespan was the centre of attraction; she stayed at Tournay during the siege of Maestricht, and there gave birth to a fourth child, Mademoiselle de Nantes. Madame Scarron, who was with her at the time, wrote to her brother that she was "quite satisfied, and had reasons to be so."[1] She was on the very best terms with Madame de Montespan. Both ladies had exerted themselves to prevent the marriage of Lauzun with "Mademoiselle," the King's cousin, and the greatest heiress in Europe. They succeeded, and Louis XIV., amidst universal approval, withdrew his consent. This late marriage of the eccentric Princess with the young profligate would have ended in ridicule. In a letter to Marshal d'Albret, Madame Scarron did not hesitate to praise the beauty of her friend Madame de Montespan, and to say that little was left to her when she missed the comfort of her presence.[2]

After the legitimation of 1673 she spent most of

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. p. 184.
[2] Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 48.

her time with her charges at Court, and was treated with the distinction due to a governess of the royal children of France. Constant intercourse between the two ladies, however, proved fatal. Madame de Montespan had no self-control; she became more and more exacting and imperious, was evidently jealous and anxious to get rid of Madame Scarron. She deeply hurt her feelings by trying to marry her off. The bridegroom she had in view was an elderly widower, the Duke de Brancas-Villars. His portrait by Tallemant is not flattering: "He was ridiculous in mind and body, hunch-backed, imbecile, and impecunious."[1]

Madame Scarron's anger expressed itself in the words that she had no intention to increase her difficulties by entering the married state, "which causes the misery of three-fourths of mankind."[2] She entirely disagreed with Madame de Montespan on another subject, the one nearest to her heart. She was convinced that the children were badly fed and their health ruined by doctors and apothecaries; moreover, she felt that "she made herself hated while trying in vain to prevent harm being done." She owed too much to Madame de Montespan to be hostile to her, but she would not endure her temper and her attempts to make a tool of her and to lower her in the esteem of the King. The situation, which was strained, became intolerable after painful explanations and terrible outbreaks, one of which occurred in the presence of Louis XIV.[3] The King tried unsuccessfully to act as peacemaker, and had to confess that it was easier to pacify Europe than two fighting women. Madame de Sévigné spoke of "the prettiest bit of hatred" ever witnessed in her day, and was on the lookout for news

[1] Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, vi. p. 408; Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 149.

[2] Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 42–43.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 211, 221, 233, 248, 249, 251, 254.

from Versailles.[1] The only way out of these exhausting complications was to leave the Court. Madame Scarron waited most anxiously for the fulfilment of the King's promise to reward her services. She was not grasping as regards money, but she was a good manager, and had experienced the hardships of poverty. Although she proved relatively disinterested amidst a society which shamefully abused the monarch's generosity, she was determined to secure her pecuniary independence, even at the risk of becoming contemptible to herself "as the most interested creature in the world."[2] A privilege granted her for the construction of newly-invented stoves did not amount to much.[3] In the autumn of 1674 the King redeemed his promise. He gave her two hundred and fifty thousand livres for the acquisition of Maintenon, an estate near Chartres, ten miles from Versailles. Its rental was rated at fifteen thousand livres. The site was not remarkable for beauty, but it reminded the new owner of Mursay, where she had spent her childhood. She felt relieved from all further cares, happy and contented to think that she would never have to ask for anything again. It was usual for a landowner to take the name of the property, and in February 1675 the King addressed Madame Scarron in conversation as "Madame de Maintenon." From that moment, Madame Scarron disappears from history, but it was not until May 1688 that royal patents re-created in her favour the Marquisate of Maintenon, the title of which was first granted her in 1680.[4] Madame de Sévigné, when she heard of the change in her friend's fortunes, joyously

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 59; Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, iv., 7 Août, 10 Nov. 1675; 6 Mai 1676.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. pp. 218, 238, 248, 251.

[3] Depping, *Correspondance administrative sous Louis XIV.*, iii. 30 Sept. 1674.

[4] De Boislisle, *Scarron*, p. 173.

called her "Madame de Maintenant." Abbé Gobelin would not advise an immediate withdrawal from Court. The refuges for destitute children, which Madame de Maintenon had called into life, and many other good works and future possibilities depended on her presence. The plan to reside at Maintenon was never given up and never carried out.[1]

The Lent of 1675 brought an unexpected and very different solution.

Louis XIV. had confessors who shut their eyes to scandals which they were unable to prevent, and also preachers who told him the truth. One of them went so far as to compare conquerors to brigands.[2] Another, Bourdaloue, implored the King to change his life, and, as Easter was near, to prepare himself for the reception of the sacraments. Neither he nor Madame de Montespan ever entirely abstained from approaching them, but it was believed that, instead of the consecrated Host, the priest gave them merely bread. One day, when Madame de Maintenon expressed her concern and surprise at what she rightly called a sacrilege, the Marquise burst into tears. She had moments of bitter remorse, in which she lavished large sums on charities, visited convents and churches, and practised severe austerities. Once during an evening reception, Louis XIV. was conversing with Madame de Maintenon, while his courtiers were playing cards or talking to the ladies. When they were out of hearing, she said to the King: "Sire, you like your musketeers. This very morning you were delighted with them. What would you do if you were told that one of them had taken to himself the wife of a married comrade and was living with her? I feel quite sure that you would turn him out immediately, and that he

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 38, 44, 45, 46, 48.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. p. 256; Bourdaloue, *Sermon sur l'Impureté*.

would have to spend the night somewhere else." The King answered, with an embarrassed smile, that this was true. Bossuet, whenever he saw the King, spoke severely to him and entirely approved when a humble priest of Versailles not only refused absolution to Madame de Montespan, but would not even hear her confession.[1]

All these incidents bore fruit. When Easter came Madame de Montespan left for Paris, where she led "an exemplary life." Louis XIV. promised Bossuet to give her up, and joined his army in May 1675. His mistress went to her Château de Clagny, where the Queen paid her a short visit, and where she employed twelve hundred workmen to embellish the property, which had cost millions. Its splendour was compared to the gardens of Armida.[2]

Meanwhile, Madame de Maintenon devoted herself once more to the children. The Duc du Maine, who was a sickly little boy with a limp, was repeatedly on the verge of death. In 1674 his governess had taken him to a famous surgeon at Antwerp, whose treatment failed. They then travelled under assumed names.[3] In May 1675, Madame de Maintenon left with him for Barèges, a watering-place in the Pyrenees. The journey was a triumphant progress, and royal honours were paid by both officials and people to the King's little bastard son. He was greeted with speeches, and conducted in state into the towns at which he stopped. At Bordeaux the governor, Marshal d'Albret, gave a splendid reception to his friend Madame de Maintenon. At Blaye his example was followed by the Duc de Saint-Simon, whose son, the author of the

[1] Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, i. p. 67; ii. p. 76 ff.; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 168; Bossuet, *Œuvres*, xxxvii. p. 83, Ed. de Versailles.
[2] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 1675, Juin–Juillet–Août.
[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, pp. 197–198, 270, 275.

Memoirs, was born in that year. From Barèges Madame de Maintenon was soon able to send satisfactory reports about the little Duke. He improved in health, and developed into an infant prodigy. He was seven years old when the King praised him one day for his reasonable behaviour. "How could it be otherwise," retorted the little boy, "my governess being Reason herself?" He loved Madame de Maintenon, and she doted on him, and had his first letters put into print.[1] They abound in flattery for his "beautiful mother" and for the King, and would have done credit to any courtier. Louis XIV., who was very fond of him too, kept up an active correspondence with Madame de Maintenon at Barèges. Abbé Gobelin was informed of it, and thought that the friendship was getting "too warm."[2]

On her way back Madame de Maintenon visited Surimeau, the property of her grandmother. She showed great kindness to the children of the man who had wronged her family, and would not enter into legal proceedings against him. At Niort she spent the night at the convent which had received her in 1648. She then went for three days to Mursay and renewed her intimacy with the Villettes, whom she found charming. Her absence had lasted six months.

At Blois she met Madame de Montespan with her sister, the abbess; they both were most friendly. At Versailles the King had a pleasant surprise when she went up to him, leading the little Duke by the hand, with the pride of a mother in his recovered health. On his return from the army Bossuet had met him with the intention of fortifying him in his good resolutions. Louis XIV. interrupted him: "Don't tell me anything," he said; "the apartments of

[1] *Œuvres d'un Auteur de sept ans*, 1677.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, i. p. 274.

CALIFORNIA

MADAME DE MONTESPAN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Madame de Montespan are ready for her reception."[1] She joined him, and they were more ardently in love with each other than ever. It did not last.

In the course of the next three years Madame de Montespan experienced all the alternatives of triumph and despair. She had open rivals, on whom she knew how to revenge herself, but she had also to battle against obscure intrigues. Her jealous rage vented itself on the King, with whom she had violent altercations. He exasperated her by his infidelities, yet he revived her feelings for him by returns of tenderness. Then came a time when he did not conceal his impatience of her yoke. She endangered her health rather than give him up, and forced herself to affect gaiety whilst eating her heart out. To those who knew her best she became an object of pity. One of these was Madame de Maintenon. She complained no more of the Marquise, but spoke frankly, and told her that the time had come to give up the hopeless struggle for the heart of the King and to save her position by securing his friendship. The Marquise, while rejecting her advice, now clung to her with a desperate affection, which proved more difficult to resist than former enmity. Twice did she find a much-needed shelter at Maintenon, first in May 1677, and again in June 1678. One of her last two children was born there, and these events were now kept as secret as possible. Madame de Maintenon was not requested to take care of these little ones; she hardly ever mentions the Comte de Toulouse, born in 1672, who grew up into a good, honest, but insignificant young man, who was liked by everybody.[2]

Her hopes of inducing the King to lead a better life

[1] Beausset, *Vie de Bossuet;* Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, August–October 1676, June 1677, July 7, 1677.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires,* xv. p. 22.

having utterly failed, she gave way to a despondency which she did not care to hide. Part of the winter and the whole spring were spent at Maintenon. She saw the King in June, after his return from the army, but left almost immediately with the Duc du Maine for Barèges and Bagnières. They remained absent till the end of October. For the next two years no evidence is to be found of a closer intimacy between Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon. She saw him, when at Court, in the apartments of Madame de Montespan.

Her letters between 1678 and 1680 are few, and chiefly addressed to her brother, whom she could not trust with her own troubles. He had married a little bourgeoise, whom she did her best to befriend and to educate, but who never gave her satisfaction.

In March 1679 she asked Abbé Gobelin for special prayers, "as the King was on the edge of a precipice." A lady-in-waiting of the Duchesse d'Orléans, Mademoiselle de Fontanges, had officially taken Madame de Montespan's place, and had become Louis XIV.'s mistress.

The new year was eventful. The marriage of the Dauphin with a Bavarian princess, sister of Max Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, was to be celebrated at the beginning of 1680. The Duc du Maine passed out of the hands of Madame de Maintenon into those of his governor, Monsieur de Montchevreuil. On January 8, the King signed the patent by which he created a new charge in the household of the Dauphin, "for Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon, whose good conduct and services were known to him." The laconic decree was nothing short of a revolution in Court etiquette. Ladies of the highest rank coveted such a place. The new *seconde dame d'atour*, or woman of the bedchamber, took up her functions a few weeks later; she left

Saint-Germain in February 1680, with a numerous suite and in the company of Bossuet, Bishop of Condom. A few miles from Strasburg they went to meet in great state the future consort of the heir to the throne.

CHAPTER V

THE ANONYMOUS QUEEN OF FRANCE

LOUIS XIV. hardly ever went to Paris. He had never forgotten the humiliations of the Fronde and his flight from the capital at dead of night, when still a mere boy. But he had a staff of officials who found out everything that was going on within the precincts of the town, and secret information from inferior agents controlled their reports. The King had more time to devote himself to the interior administration of France, now that the conclusion of the peace of Nimeguen had brought his people respite from incessant war. His success had been so great that he could afford to be generous. The *Memoirs* of Louis XIV., which treat of the events of 1678, contain the proud words: "My will alone it was which restored peace in Europe. I preferred the public good to the advantages and to the personal glory which the continuation of the war would have given me. I fully enjoyed and profited by the opportunities which I owed to the wisdom of my conduct and to the success of my arms. I extended the limits of my kingdom at the expense of my enemies, and I did not insist on further conquests."

In the exultation of his triumphant power, Louis XIV. got tidings from Paris which must have wounded to the quick his pride as a sovereign and his feelings as a man.

In 1676 the poisoner Marie Madeleine d'Aubray, Marquise de Brinvilliers, expiated her innumerable

crimes on the scaffold. Among her victims were two of her brothers and her father. Madame de Sévigné wrote to her daughter that it took Madame de Brinvilliers eight months to get rid of her father: "while he caressed her she doubled the dose. Medea was of a milder disposition."

Louis XIV. himself exacted from Louvois, Secretary of State for War, and from La Reynie, who shortly before had become head of the police, the exemplary punishment of all persons connected with these abominations. The *affaire Brinvilliers* led to other discoveries. The belief in sorcery, in alchemy, in satanism, in magic arts, in the finding of hidden treasures by incantations, was still shared by people of all classes.

In January 1679 La Reynie had a woman arrested who was known by the name of La Voisin. She was exceedingly clever and practised palmistry, medicine, and chiromancy; she was consulted by innumerable people, kept an open house and is said to have squandered yearly earnings which amounted to no less than a hundred thousand francs in revelries with her paramours and accomplices. Her real business was sorcery. She associated with an old scoundrel, the priest Guibourg, who celebrated the so-called black mass on the bodies of naked women. During this sacrilegious ceremony, little infants were bled to death and with their blood abominable rites were performed. The disappearance of these unfortunate victims filled the population of Paris with terror, but for a long time the authors of the crimes could not be traced. La Voisin confessed at her trial that she had burnt and then buried in her garden the remains of two thousand five hundred poor little children, whom she took care to baptize before she killed them. She and her fellow-criminals practised poisoning on a large scale. They were supposed to possess the

secret of philters and drugs which had the property of reviving the passion of love, or of exciting it in favour of one particular person.

When La Reynie brought these horrible deeds to light, the King instituted a special commission, composed of lawyers and men of authority, to inquire into them. It was called *la Chambre ardente;* its sittings were secret and lasted from April 1679 to July 1682. Two hundred and eighteen individuals were convicted; thirty-six out of this number were executed. Among those compromised by the depositions of sorcerers and poisoners were ladies of the highest rank. Their names are to be found in the official reports of La Reynie to Louis XIV.[1] Olympia Mancini, Comtesse de Soissons, and others fled from France. The Marshal de Luxembourg was sent to the Bastille for having tried to poison his wife. The Duchesse de Bouillon, who was accused of the same crime against her husband, showed great pluck. She went in state to the tribunal, accompanied by her lover and the Duke, and laughed her accusers to scorn. Nevertheless, she could not disprove the charges against her and was exiled by order of the King. At the opening of the trial, Louis XIV. would not hear of any distinction in favour of rank or sex. He changed his mind in October 1680, after La Voisin's execution.

By his order the sittings of the *Chambre ardente* were interrupted until May 1681, and the depositions of Voisin's accomplices sent straight to him. The reason for this was exceedingly serious. The name of Madame de Montespan had become implicated in these horrors.[2] The first charge against her was vague. She was accused of having used incantations

[1] Funk-Brentano, *Le Drame des Poisons*, pp. 152–179, 214–220, 230; Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, Jan. 26, May 31, 1680, &c. &c.

[2] Funk-Brentano, *Le Drame des Poisons*, pp. 144–147, 154–160, 163, 172–174, 226–227; La Fare, *Mémoires*, pp. 248–250.

against Mademoiselle de la Vallière. La Reynie evidently did not believe that the Marquise had also tried to poison her. He was a brave, honest-minded man, and very anxious to find out the truth. He sums up the charges against Madame de Montespan under three heads: she had attempted to get rid of Mademoiselle de Fontanges by poison, but the evidence on that point was at least very doubtful; she had had the sacrilegious mass celebrated on her body by Guibourg; she had repeatedly mixed with the King's food love-philters which were composed of cantharides, toad's dust, bat's blood, &c., deposited under the priest's chalice during mass, before they were used.[1]

Louvois, Colbert and the King himself were determined to save the prestige of the monarchy. Louis XIV. never revealed by word or deed what he felt when he read in La Reynie's reports that the woman he had loved for ten years had so disgraced herself. His outward calm and royal bearing stood the test of these violent emotions. He had the power to interfere with the course of justice by arbitrary decree, the *lettres de cachet*. He exerted this power; all Madame de Montespan's accusers were sent to prison for life. The *Chambre ardente* met again and carried on proceedings against the other culprits. The criminal attempts made by the Marquise remained a secret in the keeping of the King. In 1709 he burnt the evidence against her with his own hands. Royal endurance, however, had its limits. Madame de Montespan and the King exchanged words which could never be forgiven or forgotten.[2] She was promoted to the post of Mistress of the Robes to the Queen, and this distinction marks the end of her

[1] Funk-Brentano, *Le Drame des Poisons*, pp. 179–193, 222; J. Lemoine, *Madame de Montespan et la Légende des Poisons*.

[2] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, April 6, June 15, 1680, Bussy à Madame de Sévigné; Funk-Brentano, *Le Drame des Poisons*, pp. 146–147, 188–189; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 102, 111–119.

relations with Louis XIV. He never again saw her alone.

Stories about other violent scenes said to have taken place between them in the presence of Madame de Maintenon are inventions of La Beaumelle. Abbé de Choisy, though generally untrustworthy, may have had good authority for his account of the final disgrace of the King's haughty mistress. According to Choisy, who at all events was a contemporary, Madame de Maintenon most reluctantly consented to inform Madame de Montespan that the decision of the King was irrevocable, and that he advised her to think of the salvation of her soul.[1] The Marquise was exasperated, and did not submit. An anecdote, which is a pure invention, is, however, typical of the situation, and may therefore be related. Madame de Montespan flung the insult at Madame de Maintenon, that she had become the King's mistress. "In that case," she answered, "the King would have three." "Yes," replied the Marquise; "I am his mistress in name, Fontanges is so in fact, but you are the mistress of his heart."[2]

Even Madame de Maintenon, who is generally so cautious in her utterances, wrote significantly to her brother: "Take care what you say about me; people repeat absurd things supposed to come from you." "Don't speak of my position either in praise or in blame. There is a furious opposition against me; everything is done to try and work my ruin. My enemies won't be successful—we can face them; but if they were, we should bear up bravely enough."[3]

The thrill of legitimate triumph runs through her words. The King was free. In April 1680

[1] Abbé de Choisy, *Mémoires*.

[2] La Beaumelle, *Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon*, ii. p. 215; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 85–87, 101–104, 325.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 109, 111, 114, July 1680.

Mademoiselle de Fontanges was created a duchess and dismissed. Elisabeth Charlotte describes her as beautiful and full of romance; cleverness, however, she had none. After her confinement her health broke down. She died forgotten in 1681, at the age of twenty-two, and rumour attributed her death to poison. The excitement produced by the tragic events which necessitated the proceedings of the *Chambre ardente* accounts very naturally for such suspicions. They were unfounded; the death of Madame de Fontanges was due to natural causes.

The King was now forty-two and still comparatively young. He was surrounded by fair women who would have felt honoured instead of disgraced had he chosen them. The guides of his conscience had been powerless to prevent such scandals. It was well known that the Jesuit La Chaize, who became his confessor in 1674, used to feign sickness when Easter-time approached. This "political illness" saved him from the necessity of refusing absolution to his impenitent master. If Louis XIV. had continued to lead a life which, with increasing years, must have cost him his self-respect, France would have witnessed the degrading scenes which Louis XV. inflicted upon her three generations later. To everybody's intense astonishment, however, no love-story could be connected with the name of Louis XIV. after the dismissal of his last mistress in 1680. Madame de Maintenon had become "the soul of the Court."

Her official position carried with it the right to private apartments in the various royal residences and to an independent household of her own. It was her duty to wait upon the Dauphine, and the King openly spent several hours with her every day. Whenever he saw her outside her own rooms, a gentleman-in-waiting fetched and led her back "in the face of all the world. . . . She shows the King an entirely

new country, hitherto unknown to him, the intercourse of friendship and conversation, without constraint or chicane." Happily for posterity, Madame de Sévigné's daughter, Madame de Grignan, whose husband was governor of Provence, had to be informed about everything which happened at Versailles. When one of their intimates, Madame de Sévigné's cousin, Madame de Coulanges, expressed her doubts about the nature of Madame de Maintenon's relations with Louis XIV., she got the well-known answer: "Did she believe that the first volume of her life could be ignored for ever? And unless it were told with malice, what harm could it do her?"[1] The public was no less preoccupied with her person than Madame de Coulanges. An Italian nobleman, Primi Visconti, who lived in Paris between 1673 and 1681, has left a curious narrative of what he then heard: "The King spent most of his time with Madame de Maintenon, to the detriment of Madame de Montespan and Mademoiselle de Fontanges, and although she was old, nobody knew what to think about it. Some people believed her to be the King's confidante, others regarded her as a go-between, or as a clever woman of whom he made use to write his Memoirs. Many were of opinion that there are men who prefer old women to young ones. Madame de Montespan and the enemies of the new favourite did all they could to trace blemishes in her origin and her past, a proceeding which repeats itself whenever anybody is getting on in the world. It was rumoured that she had been seen dressed as a page at Monsieur de Villarceaux's bedside. But one of my particular friends, the lieutenant-general, Marquis de Marsilly, the man who defended Barcelona in 1651, and had been one of the worshippers of Madame Scarron,

[1] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 20 March, 6 April, 5, 9, 20, 30 June, 7, 17 July 1680.

assured me that she was a virtuous woman and had refused thirty thousand ducats from the Controller-General, De Lorme, although she was poor."[1]

There was another supreme test—the organisation of the secret police. Its daily reports included everything, from the most important matters to the meanest gossip. It was a well-known fact that private letters were not safe and that anonymous informers conveyed mysterious denunciations through this channel for the King's information. Madame de Maintenon's enemies had plenty of opportunities to get a hearing, but, nevertheless, the King's feelings underwent no change, and his esteem for her increased as time went on. She herself did not shun the shadow of the past, nor did she try to bury it in oblivion. One of Scarron's relatives, Mademoiselle de Harteloire, was living at her expense and under her roof at Maintenon. Through her intercession, Mademoiselle de Scudéry was provided with a pension from the King. The twenty years which had elapsed since Scarron's death had not swept away all the members of his society and there was hardly one of those who had frequented his house who did not experience the kindness and goodwill of his widow.[2] She had a monument erected to his memory, and Louis XIV. so little avoided recalling his name that two of the poet's comedies, *Don Japhet* and *Jodelet, Maître ou Valet*, were repeatedly acted at Versailles.

It was an invariable rule that, whenever the King travelled about or went to his army, the Queen should accompany him. The Dauphine being often prevented by bad health from doing so too, Madame de Maintenon received orders to join her Majesty.

[1] Primi Visconti, *Mémoires de la Cour de France, traduits de l'Italien*, p. 267; A. Taphanel, *La Beaumelle et Saint-Cyr*, p. 205.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 49, 181, 226, 265, 276.

They went to Flanders in August 1680, to Chambord in 1682, to Franche-Comté and Alsace from May to July 1683.[1]

Louis XIV. had always kept up outward appearances in his relations with his wife. He never entirely neglected her, but avoided her company, which bored him to death. She took part in all official functions, gave audiences, was magnificently dressed, wore jewels innumerable, and was wont to repeat, with a placid smile, "that she loved the King so much; that he was so kind to her; that she was so happy in France." Whenever her presence was not required, she led a retired life, "more fit for a Carmelite nun than for a queen," and spent it in good works and in visiting convents. She passed hours with Madame de la Vallière, who had carried out her resolve to inflict upon herself a penance, the austerity of which even Madame de Maintenon had defied her to endure.

The King's conversion was incomplete as long as he did not return to his wife. Madame de Maintenon set herself the task of bringing them together again, and succeeded in doing so, although it was rendered very difficult by the poor Queen herself. She was so terribly afraid of her husband that she trembled all over when he wanted to see her, and had to be pushed into his room. Yet she declared that never before had she been so happy. Her gratitude to the author "of those new blessings" was unbounded. She sent her presents and paid her a visit at Maintenon. Madame de Maintenon was also perfectly contented. The soul of Louis XIV., it very naturally seemed to her, had been given into her keeping by Providence itself, and it was her destiny to carry out its designs. Her habitual self-discipline did not fail her. She

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance genérale*, ii. pp. 115, 249–250, 298, 358, 366.

modestly declined the praise which even bishops and the Pope himself lavished upon her; she would not be glorified for good intentions which God had inspired.[1] "People," she said, "must get accustomed to my presence. My life is quiet, solitary, and entirely in harmony with my tastes." She patiently endured the vindictiveness of Madame de Montespan; she even acknowledged that this lady's irritation against her was the natural outcome of their respective positions, that it had to be borne, and that justice could not be expected.

They met constantly and onlookers might have believed them to be friends. There were hours when they cordially enjoyed each other's conversation, and then Madame de Montespan would speak of a truce, which did not prevent further hostilities.[2] Another difficulty was the hostile behaviour of the Dauphine. She was very intelligent and cultivated, but she had neither beauty nor health, and her disposition was melancholy to a degree. Madame de Maintenon pleased her exceedingly at first and she liked to have her hair arranged by her. Madame de Richelieu, who presided over the household of the Princess, became jealous and prejudiced her against Madame de Maintenon,[3] whose peace of mind was not disturbed by these intrigues; she felt secure in the regard and confidence of the King and would not have been a woman had not his friendship flattered her.

This state of things seemed destined to last. The Queen enjoyed very good health, and was of the same age as the King. They left together in May 1683 for the long journey which took them first to

[1] Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 71 ff.; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 156, 168, 240, 255, 259; Choisy, *Mémoires*.

[2] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 109–110; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. p. 179.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 114, 187; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 112, 129, 202, 205; ii. pp. 114, 146, 210, 263.

Burgundy, then to Belfort, Colmar, and Strasburg, the fortifications of which Louis XIV. inspected without entering the newly acquired town. After manœuvres commanded by the Duc de Villeroy, they visited Metz, Mars-la-Tour, Verdun, and Châlons, and returned to Versailles at the end of July. Life at Court was always harassing and a journey was a terrible hardship for everybody. Receptions, festivities, military shows, went on uninterruptedly, with the strictest observance of ceremonial and etiquette. Wherever the King went, he exacted a rigorous service that amounted to slavery. The organisation of his household presented a striking contrast between the luxury and splendour of his royal state and the discomfort of his domestic arrangements. The inmates of Versailles burnt tallow candles and put their legs into bags filled with straw to keep themselves warm. It is a comfort to think that tea, coffee, and chocolate had come into daily use, and that tobacco and smoking were not denied, even to ladies, although the King hated the mere smell of it.[1] Only royal persons had wax candles, carpets, and a sufficient amount of wood to keep fires alight. The sanitary arrangements baffle description. They were deplorable even at Versailles. In temporary residences, fitted up hastily for the occasion, all the necessaries of life were wanting; ladies travelled with their bedding, and had to face the privations of a campaign. When the Queen reached Versailles, she was so unwell that she had to be put to bed. On the fourth day of her illness her condition changed suddenly for the worse, and she died surrounded by the royal family. When all was over, Louis XIV. gave way to violent grief and sobbed aloud. Madame de Maintenon, who, with many others, was present in the room, tried to leave it unobserved. The younger Duc de la Rochefoucauld

[1] Sourches, *Mémoires*, ix. p. 42.

was among those who were present. He was a friend of Madame de Montespan and had intrigued with Louvois against Madame de Maintenon, but his attempts to ruin her with the King had been futile. He certainly did not like her either then or afterwards. Yet, acting on a sudden impulse, he now went up to her, seized her by the arm and led her to the King. "You are wanted here," he said. She stopped for a few moments, then Louvois offered her his arm, and conducted her to her apartments.[1]

The King spent a few days at Saint-Cloud and then left for Fontainebleau, where the royal family joined him. His sorrows were never lasting and the poor Queen was not regretted. Madame de Maintenon's more genuine grief on one occasion even made him smile. On September 6, his greatest minister, Colbert, also died. Louis XIV., who spent all his evenings with Madame de Maintenon, now took to the habit of working in her rooms with his Secretaries of State. With the one exception of Madame Henriette, his sister-in-law, who had negotiated for him with her brother, Charles II. of England, he had never tolerated the interference of women in politics. The part played by Madame de Maintenon was, for the time being, a passive one. She sat near the window at her spinning-wheel or engaged in needlework, while the King conferred with his ministers. What passed between her and Louis XIV. in private was a matter for conjecture. "I have become a meek, resigned old lady," she wrote to her brother.

D'Aubigné was on his way to her, but she asked him not to come. "The reason which keeps you away is so glorious," she said, "that you ought to rejoice. It is not advisable for me to see anybody now."[2] Abbé

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 145–146.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 147, 151, 302, 305, 316, 323.

Gobelin also received a message: "Don't forget me in the presence of God. I want strength to make good use of my happiness." She shed tears, showed signs of great inward agitation, complained of her health, and took long walks in the forest of Fontainebleau in company with her old and trusted friend, Madame de Montchevreuil. When they left for Versailles at the beginning of October, these signs of nervousness and preoccupation had entirely disappeared. She was herself again. The confidante of her good works, Madame de Brinon, received many letters which contained the minutest details and the best possible advice about the keeping of the schools and the management of the charitable institutions which she had to administer; Madame de Maintenon wrote like a person who had nothing on earth to think of but the well-being of little girls and the wants of the poor.

She was forty-nine years old. As long as she was in Madame de Montespan's train, she used to dress richly. From the moment she entered the Dauphine's household, she wore black, with a peculiar headdress suited to her age, and no other jewels but a diamond cross. As a rule she never appeared in public, but when compelled to do so, she mixed quietly with the crowd. Her hair was still dark and abundant; her figure tall and imposing. Her black eyes had not lost their brightness. She was graceful in her movements, and people were struck by her beautiful hands and by the winning smile which lit up her otherwise serious countenance. Her beauty was a thing of the past; she was a matron, and old age was approaching. The die was cast: since the days of Fontainebleau Madame de Maintenon knew that Louis XIV. was determined to make her his wife, and that his heart belonged to her, and to her only, with a faithful, deep, and tender affection which never changed for thirty years.

There is no written proof whatever of the marriage.

LOUIS XIV.
From the painting by Rigaud

The best authorities on the subject agree that it was celebrated probably in January 1684, in the chapel of Versailles, at midnight. Achille de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, officiated. The Marquis de Montchevreuil, Louvois, the Secretary of State, and Bontemps, the chief valet de chambre of the King, acted as witnesses.[1] Montchevreuil had been Madame Scarron's best friend, and their intimacy had never been interrupted. Louvois, who had been devoted to Madame de Montespan and had known Madame Scarron for years, had been the leading man in the State since Colbert's death. Bontemps had an influence which was far above his position in the monarch's service. He enjoyed his confidence, knew all his most intimate affairs and was respected by everybody on account of his disinterestedness, his discretion, and his loyalty to his royal master.

Abbé de Choisy and Saint-Simon are responsible for the story that Louvois implored the King on his knees never to make his marriage public.[2] There is absolutely no indication of such a wish having been expressed by Madame de Maintenon.

Did she love the King? It is unthinkable that his devotion should have left her indifferent. Once, at least, she revealed what she felt, and then she spoke of "her happiness." His loyalty could not but touch her heart and win her affections.

Little notes of his addressed to her are still extant. In the most courteous terms he requests the privilege of her society, of a walk with her, of a meeting, the hour and place of which are left for her to decide.[3] He had qualities which attracted her, and merits which won her admiration. It was due to his

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. p. 108; xii. p. 99; La Fare, *Mémoires*, pp. 193–197.

[2] Choisy, *Memoires*, pp. 326–328.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. p. 323, and *Lettres et Billets du Roi à Madame de Maintenon.*

chivalrous behaviour and perfect tact that nobody ever dared to show her disrespect. The legitimacy of their relations was tacitly admitted. He went to her at all hours of the day, but she never went to him except when he was ill and required her care.

On one such occasion, Monsieur unexpectedly entered his brother's room. As it was a very hot day, the King lay in bed uncovered. "You see me in this state," he said, "and therefore you can imagine what Madame is to me."[1] Louis XIV. gave much, but he exacted more than he gave.

Madame de Maintenon was a woman of no less than seventy years of age, when her spiritual adviser reminded her of the obligations of her married state towards a man whom she must know to be weak, who was three years younger than herself, and who might yet be lost without her. The priest and bishop who thus admonished her promised her heavenly reward if she persevered. He also spoke to the King, and called him "blessed in the love of an incomparable companion."[2]

She was his wife and friend, but also his slave. Her time, her strength, her very life were his. In the evil days of defeat and terrible bereavement she shared his sorrows to the full; of her own she never dared to speak. They spent happy days in common, but even then the notion of freedom had no meaning left for her. If she loved Louis XIV. she hated the Court. "People who have not breathed its atmosphere cannot realise the horror of it," was an oft-repeated expression of her feelings on the subject.

Her powers of endurance were sustained by the conviction that she was responsible for the King's soul. His greatness, the greatness of France, the

[1] Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 80 ff.; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, pp. 186–189, 200, note 1, 1705.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 193, 195, 196.

welfare of millions, depended on the integrity of his moral character. He had given it into a woman's hands. She had no special gifts and showed no great political insight. Her faculties did not raise her above the level of her time and generation; she shared its prejudices, and did not avoid its errors. But she achieved the one task which she had promised God and herself to perform. Youth and prosperity had corrupted Louis XIV. Under the shock of overwhelming catastrophes, at the open grave of children and grandchildren, his courage amounted to heroism and compelled Europe to respect him in his old age.

On his deathbed he acknowledged his debt. Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon, had been faithful to the last.

CHAPTER VI

VERSAILLES AND THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES

THE personality of the great King is inseparable from the glories of Versailles.[1] His father had built a little hunting-lodge near the village of that name and Louis XIV. went there for the first time in 1651; he was a mere boy, and the site took his fancy. Early in his reign he began to enlarge and to improve the original building, which was never pulled down. He had a number of residences and Colbert pleaded in vain that new ones were not desirable. The Louvre, the most magnificent palace in the world, stood unfinished and Colbert advised applying the resources of the treasury to its completion. Fontainebleau, the creation of Francis I. and Henry II., and Chambord, another marvel of the French Renaissance, were much admired by the King himself, who visited them every year. His birthplace, Saint-Germain, where he spent the greater part of his youth, was only completed in 1685. But the creation of Versailles had a passionate attraction for him. He had its gardens and its park laid out; he built, he pulled down again, he spent many millions yearly on the extension of its grounds and on the execution of plans which he inspired and constantly altered till 1678, when Mansard was nominated architect of Versailles. Under his direction the Galerie des Glaces was begun

[1] L. Dussieux, *Le Château de Versailles*; P. Nolhac, *Creation de Versailles;* A. Bertrand, *Versailles ce qu'il fut, ce qu'il est, ce qu'il devait être;* J. Guiffrey, *Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi sous Louis XIV.*

and the King's private apartments made ready. In the summer of 1683 the château became the chief residence of Louis XIV. It was nothing less than a little world of its own. The members of the royal family, the great dignitaries of the Crown, the heads of State departments, their officials, and an innumerable staff, congregated under the King's roof. They numbered several thousands. Families kept separate households and had to provide for their own nourishment. Persons of the highest rank were content to sleep in garrets and to endure every kind of discomfort rather than stay away from Versailles. Louis XIV. loved it and was proud of his work. He knew every detail and inspected his gardens daily. He was particularly fond of very bright-coloured flowers.

No less than two thousand orange trees stood in his conservatories. Everything he undertook had to be on a gigantic scale. In the afternoon the King and his company rode in the park, the enormous extent of which afforded him a splendid hunting-ground and a great variety of game. On festive occasions, when the public was admitted, no less than fourteen hundred fountains played. Their silvery shower fell softly on groups of gods and goddesses, which the genius of first-rate sculptors had created and placed on rocky mounds in the centre of their marble basins. Statues innumerable peeped out discreetly from shady grottos, whose beauty lay hidden in solitude, while stately walks were distributed so as to open ever-varying vistas to the enchanted eye, and yet never to shut out from view the palace itself, with its magnificent garden front and its wide terraces. Le Nôtre, who compelled nature to carry out his designs and confined it at will into symmetry or allowed it to spread into luxurious growth of branch and foliage, was no less an artist than Mansard

himself. Le Nôtre combined with him, just as Mansard combined with the painters, who immortalised on the walls of Versailles battles and treaties, royal meetings, and other remarkable events of the reign. They were assisted by first-rate workmen who carved ivory, moulded bronze, wove Gobelins and tapestries, manufactured china and glass, and transformed crystal, silver, and gold into treasures of surpassing beauty. The wealth of the nation poured into Versailles. The "style of Louis XIV." is the outcome of the best efforts of the age, the tribute paid to the King by the arts which he protected. "Versailles is of astounding beauty—I am delighted to be there. The King wants everybody to enjoy himself," says Madame de Maintenon, who is sparing in her praise.[1]

His royal home stood ready at last, but the essential was wanting. There was no water and a sufficient supply of it was not to be found in the neighbourhood. An attempt was made to carry the waters of the Eure from Maintenon to Versailles by an aqueduct which was to rival those of ancient Rome. Between 1684 and 1688 a whole army of workmen, most of them soldiers, were busy with its construction. The country was so marshy and insalubrious that thousands of these men died of fever and other epidemics. A hundred and eighty-seven million francs were squandered on the gigantic undertaking, which finally had to be given up as impracticable, and Versailles was supplied with water from the Seine. As far as incomplete accounts allow of an approximate estimate, Versailles cost four hundred millions of francs to build, and estranged the monarch from the nation. This moral loss exceeded by far the material damage wrought by such insane prodigality.

In the isolation of Versailles the King was

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance génerale*, ii. p. 166.

surrounded by an exclusive and artificial world; he never came into contact with the forces which were shaping the minds of a new generation. He lived far away from his capital; his Parisians and his *Parlements* saw him no more; he did not perceive that a spirit of independence and of growing opposition was rising up, slowly but irresistibly, against the system which he represented. As long as he was successful and victorious, these signs of discontent were hardly discernible, even to experienced observers. The loyalty of France to its King still amounted to worship, and no one knew better than he how to temper the harm which he had done. He did not go to his people, but he welcomed them to Versailles. He degraded aristocrats into courtiers and bound them with the golden chain of ceremonial, while the doors of his palace stood open to the lowest, and no petitioner was excluded from his presence. On fixed days of the week he dined in public, and on these occasions everybody was admitted. Royal weddings and births, the reception of foreign princes and ambassadors, the ratification of treaties, were celebrated in public, and no restraint was imposed on the Parisians and the population of the neighbourhood, who on such days flocked into Versailles.

At the birth of the Duc de Bourgogne, the eldest son of the Dauphin, the crowd became so excited that it tore up the parquetry of the royal apartments in order to light bonfires. When the King appeared, holding the infant prince in his arms, the enthusiasm broke all bounds; he was embraced and nearly suffocated by those nearest him.[1]

Mascarades, *carrousels*, the great cavalcades and hunting expeditions of the monarch were shows which attracted multitudes. Louis XIV. had introduced "Venetian nights"; the park was then illuminated,

[1] Choisy, *Mémoires*, p. 275.

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magnificent fireworks were let off, boats on the great canal were gay with lanterns and torches and behind the King's barge there was another for the orchestra. It played under Lully's direction the favourite airs of the monarch, who loved and understood music and joined in the singing. Yet the question may well be asked, Was life worth living at Versailles, and were its inmates happy? Madame de Maintenon answers in the negative: "I see all the passions—treason, greed, unlimited ambition—incessantly in play. Envy leads to furious outbreaks, covetousness is insatiable, mutual hatred unrelenting. The fairy palace admired by the ignorant appears to the initiated like painted stage scenery. Behind the brilliant decoration is a poor artifice, and its lights are sham lights which smell of tallow candle."[1]

The actors who moved on this stage made no secret of their inner torments; the painful experiences of many of them proved stronger than their self-control; their smiling masks concealed badly enough the weariness of their souls. At dead of night Elisabeth Charlotte was haunted in her sleep by the vision of Heidelberg in flames. She cursed the hypocrisy of the "insipid existence" to which she was condemned, while her country was ruined by Louvois and her "rights" used as a pretext for inflicting intolerable wrong.

There was also the Bavarian Dauphine,[2] who led a miserable, solitary life. Her marriage was one of the stipulations of the treaty of 1670, made in return for the Elector's promise eventually to support the claims of Louis XIV. to the Imperial crown. Royal ladies resigned themselves to the fate of being sacrificed to dynastic interests, and this one had little to

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 188.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. p. 520, App. VI., "Portrait de la Dauphine."

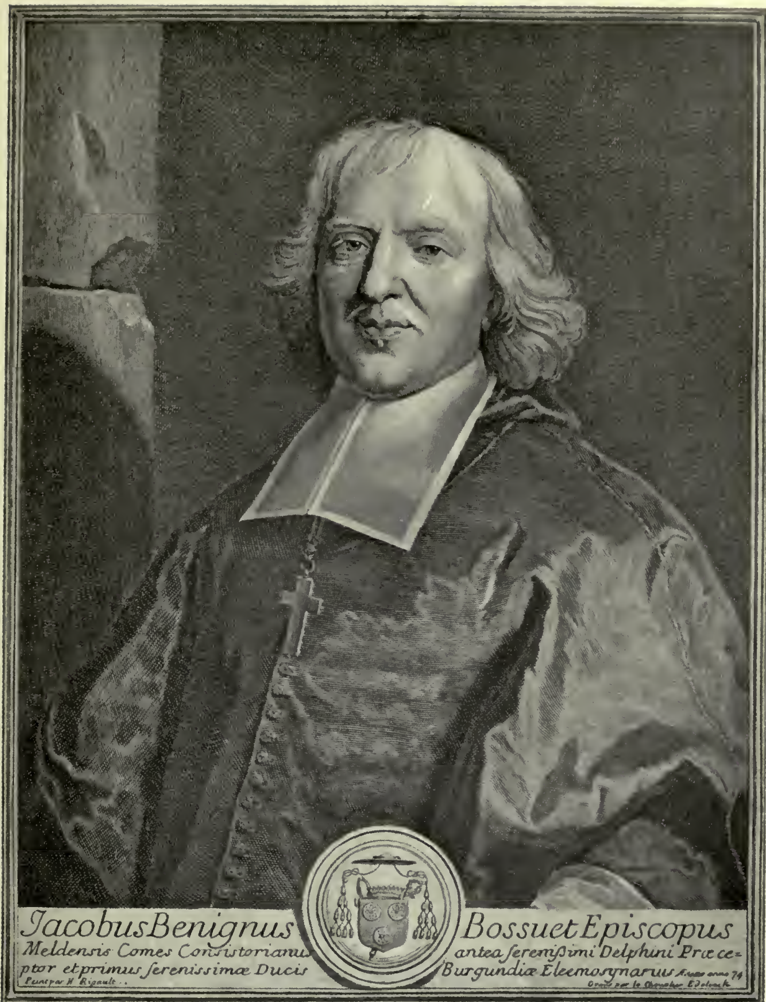
regret. Coulanges, a French ambassador, who spent two days at Munich, gives an account of the Bavarian Court which sounds dismal enough: "In this convent people get up at six, go to mass at nine, dine for two hours at ten, attend vespers every day, have supper at six, and go to bed at nine."[1] The Elector was dreadfully jealous of his beautiful wife, a princess of Savoy, who pined her life away in this uncongenial atmosphere. Madame prided herself on "having cured the Dauphine of many Bavarian superstitions."[2] When she arrived at Versailles, she astonished everybody by a pride of race, as unbending as that of the Bourbons themselves. The first person who experienced it was Sophie de Löwenstein, a charming German lady, engaged to be married to the Marquis de Dangeau. The Löwensteins were an illegitimate branch of the house of Wittelsbach. Madame de Dangeau signed her marriage contract, "Sophie of Bavaria." The Dauphine, on reading this, flew into a violent rage, and was prevented with difficulty from tearing the deed to pieces.[3] Such a disposition made it easy enough to influence her against Madame de Maintenon, whom she considered of low birth. However, her feelings towards her soon completely changed. She even asked the King to give her the place of lady-in-waiting, left vacant by the death of the Duchesse de Richelieu. Madame de Maintenon modestly refused "to accept honours which were above her from him to whom she owed everything."[4] The letter to her brother which contains these words is altogether curious; it is dated September 27, 1684, when she was already the King's wife.

[1] Coulanges, *Mémoires*, p. 11.
[2] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, &c., ii. p. 190.
[3] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 3 Avril 1684.
[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 367, 389; Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 119–120.

The Dauphine, who was very cultured, hated gossip and silenced it once for all by remarking stiffly that she was not inquisitive. At first her marriage was not unhappy. When her health failed, she began to lead a retired life, and finally she would see nobody but her maid, with whom she shut herself up in a few little rooms and spoke German. Her husband soon got tired of her, although she bore him many children, of whom three sons survived. The King was very kind to her, and wanted her to take the late Queen's place at Court functions. But nothing could overcome her deep melancholy: "Death alone will justify me," she used to say. When the end came in 1690, soon after the birth of the Duc de Berry, she blessed him and quoted *Andromaque:* "Ah! mon fils, que tes jours coûtent cher à ta mère." The Dauphin had been asked by the King whether he would not object to so plain a bride, and his answer had been that a good, intelligent wife was all he wanted. His one idea was to get married and her good qualities were wasted on him.

He was a hopeless mediocrity. Two first-rate men, the Duc de Montausier and Bossuet himself, had presided over his education. Bossuet's *Histoire universelle* was written for him. He was beaten, drilled and admonished, but neither severity nor encouragement produced any effect. He was so indolent that the King himself was obliged to take care of the Dauphine and her sons. "Monseigneur," buried "in fat and in apathy," had no other interest than hunting, which became a monomania. During an illness which kept him in bed, he ordered game to be driven past the house, and shot at the animals through his windows. Elisabeth Charlotte exaggerates slightly when she speaks of his "terrible debauchery."

Most unexpectedly she makes some one else—Madame de Maintenon—responsible for his morals.



BOSSUET

From the portrait by Rigaud

"The Evil One," she says, "sends an old woman whenever he cannot get at a person himself." The mysterious reason which prevented the direct interference of the spirit of darkness in the Dauphin's case is left for her readers to guess. The Dauphin himself seems to have been incapable of true affection for anybody, but in many insignificant letters addressed to Madame de Maintenon he calls her "his best friend." When alone with his intimates at Meudon he spoke of her as "la bonne vieille sa belle-mère," and was said to be afraid of her.[1] Yet he always appealed to her when he wanted something done. He did so when, after his wife's death, he contemplated a morganatic marriage with Mademoiselle Choin, a rather vulgar person who captivated him, but whom he did not lead to the altar.[2] He was totally without ambition, and a most respectful and obedient son.

It had been predicted that he would die as the son of a king and the father of a king, but that he would never be a king himself.[3] The prophecy was remembered when his second son, the Duc d'Anjou, became King of Spain. He was his favourite, although he saw as little of him as of his two brothers, and he gladly paid homage to him on his accession to the throne. The eldest of the King's illegitimate offspring, the Comte de Vermandois, a son of Madame de la Vallière, was a gallant and frivolous youth, who died in 1683. His only sister was married soon after to the elder Prince de Conti and was a bewitching creature, who had inherited her mother's charm. Her husband belonged to that branch of the house of Bourbon, the head of which was his

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. p. 309; xvii. p. 424; xxi. pp. 62, 89; Bussy, *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, iii. pp. 163, 165; Dangeau, *Journal*, v. p. 180, notes; xvi. pp. 64–65.

[2] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 127–134, 137, 175.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xxi. p. 396.

grandfather, the great Condé. Both Condé and his son, Monsieur le Prince, favoured this marriage to please the King, who henceforth found no difficulty in getting princes of the blood for his bastards. The Prince de Conti, the elder, joined Prince Eugene of Savoy in Hungary, where he, his younger brother, and other French noblemen fought against the Turks. The King, who had refused them permission to go, had their letters intercepted. He was justly indignant when he found in this correspondence most offensive allusions to himself and to Madame de Maintenon.[1] She contrived to reconcile him with his favourite daughter, but Conti died in disgrace soon after his return. His brother, who succeeded to the title, was exiled, then pardoned, but Louis XIV. did not like him, and this most gifted of all the Bourbons since Condé, was not allowed to be of any real service to his country.

The elder generation was now represented by the King's cousin, "la grande Mademoiselle," the heroine of the Fronde, who had dreamt in her youth of being Queen of France. She was immensely rich, and pressure was put upon her to dispose of part of her landed property in favour of the Duc du Maine. The infant prodigy had not fulfilled the expectations raised by his precocity. He was clever and attractive, and led a blameless life, but he was excessively timid, and his physical weakness seems to have reacted on his character. Madame de Maintenon never ceased worshipping him. Her letters to his governor, Montchevreuil, are those of an over-anxious mother and show that she did not ignore the failures of her "mignon." "Less Latin, honour, probity, the feelings of a Christian and a gentleman," this is the sum of what she expected from him.[2] He was hardly fifteen when

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 407.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 98, 177, 181.

Louis XIV. gave him the government of Languedoc, and soon after sent him to the army.

His sister, Mademoiselle de Nantes, born in 1673, was married in 1685 to another grandson of Condé, the Duc de Bourbon, and called "Madame la Duchesse." Soon after her marriage she got smallpox; the great Condé nursed her, prevented the King from entering the sick-room, and died a victim of his self-devotion at the beginning of 1686. Ten years before, when Turenne fell, Louis XIV., to mark the greatness of the loss, had named seven new marshals of France. Condé also was not replaced. Both his son and his grandsons were insignificant men.

"Madame la Duchesse" had inherited the beauty, the wit, and the character of her mother, Madame de Montespan, and was no less feared than she had been. Her sarcasms, her indiscretions, and her mocking verses were known in Paris, and circulated in pamphlets which did harm to many people.[1] The second Prince de Conti, her brother-in-law, the Dauphin, and others admired her; Conti lost for her sake his chances of a crown. He had been elected King of Poland in 1697, and could not tear himself away from her. When he did arrive at Dantzig, the Elector of Saxony had taken his place.[2] The elder Conti's widow never married again and made ample use of her liberty. Her behaviour gave offence to the King, and her wicked tongue made her a thorn in the flesh to those surrounding her.[3] One day she was present with several other ladies in the room of the Dauphine, who was in bed. Madame de Conti looked at her, and, thinking her asleep, said in rather a loud voice:

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. p. 131; ii. pp. 370, 373; Dangeau, *Journal*, v. pp. 203, 328; Sourches, *Mémoires*, pp. 133–139.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 176–210, 488.

[3] Ibid., *Mémoires*, i. p. 58, note 3, 328; ii. pp. 187–189, 372–374.

"She is just as ugly asleep as awake." The Dauphine opened her eyes: "Madame," she retorted, "if I were a love-child, I would be as handsome as you are." The King had to threaten these ladies with exile, in order to make them behave. The royal family was certainly not satisfactory. "The King hasn't *grand ragoût* round him," is the candid opinion expressed by Madame de Maintenon. "I would die of grief," she said, speaking of Du Maine, "if this son did not make up by real merit the deficiencies of all the others." The King saw him daily, and preferred him to his other children, but nobody could replace Madame de Maintenon.

At Versailles their apartments were only separated by the Salle des Gardes. The devastations of the revolutionary era, and the subsequent transformation of the palace into a museum in the reign of Louis-Philippe, have completely changed its aspect. The rooms in which Madame de Maintenon received the King, the anterooms which were once crowded with petitioners and with the highest representatives of Church and State, exist no more. A staircase runs through this part of the palace; pictures of scenes from the campaigns fought in the last decade of the eighteenth century cover the walls of newly-constructed galleries. The best record of the past is Saint-Simon's description of Madame de Maintenon's surroundings. He speaks of the years between 1684 and 1698. At that time she had but one spacious room at her disposal, the two smaller reception-rooms which opened into it being evidently of no personal use to her.

Three large windows looked out on the great avenue of Versailles. On the wall opposite was the fireplace. To the right, towards the entrance, and with its back to the wall, stood the King's armchair in front of which he had a table; two seats, one for the Secretary of State whose turn it was to work with

him, the other for his papers, are the only furniture mentioned by Saint-Simon. To the left of the fire-place, in a niche lined with red damask, Madame de Maintenon, who suffered from rheumatism and was afraid of draughts, took shelter in her deep armchair and a little table stood near it. A bed occupied the middle of the fourth wall facing the entrance. A few steps on one side of the bed led up to a small door opening into a cabinet.

Other comforts she had none. Her meals were served in this room, and her daily life was so regulated as to fit in with the methodical habits of the King. He rose at eight o'clock, spent the morning hours at work and then paid a short visit to Madame de Maintenon on his way to church, where he attended mass daily at twelve o'clock. After this he gave audiences, and, as a rule, dined alone. In the afternoon he went out hunting. On the rare occasions when he did not, he drove out with members of the royal family and a few ladies in one of those big State coaches which afforded room for eight persons. Sometimes he asked Madame de Maintenon to take a walk with him. He came back early in the evening, and never departed from the habit of transacting State affairs in her presence.

Except when he went to the play or the opera, or gave balls, he remained with her till ten o'clock; then supper was served, and he kept the Court assembled till midnight, when he retired to bed.

His health was very good, but he ate so enormously that he had constantly to have recourse to remedies. Madame says that she often saw him eat four plates full of soup, a pheasant, a partridge, salad, ham, mutton, pastry, fruit and hard eggs, his favourite dish.[1]

It is not surprising to hear that in 1686 he fell dangerously ill from an internal tumour. Even quacks

[1] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, ii. p. 37.

were consulted before he resigned himself to the terrible trial, known in those days as *la grande opération*. Félix de Tassy, his first surgeon, tried his hand for several months on hospital patients who were afflicted with similar diseases; he also invented a special instrument for the purpose. On November 18 the King underwent the ordeal in presence of Louvois, La Chaize, his medical staff and Madame de Maintenon. He was tortured for several hours but showed such extraordinary fortitude and nerve that on the same day he was able to work with his ministers and to receive foreign ambassadors. The operation proved a complete success, and has remained famous in the annals of surgery. But the knife had to be applied several times, and weeks later Madame de Maintenon describes the King as being in agonies of pain for seven hours, "as if he were on the rack."[1] After his recovery he went to Paris and gave a banquet at the Town Hall in recognition of the loyalty and devotion the Parisians had shown him in his illness.

Madame de Maintenon never appeared in public unless compelled to do so on festive occasions. Then she took her place with ladies of no particular rank, so as to get lost in the crowd. She endeavoured to keep aloof from society, and succeeded for a time;[2] but later on her apartment became the centre of the royal family and to be admitted to her was everybody's ambition at Versailles. However, she contrived to save her mornings and always rose at six. She then went to church, attended to her devotions and to business, and generally her day's work was done before the King claimed the rest of her time. He did not like to go anywhere without her. She had to follow in his usual train when he joined the army in Flanders in

[1] *Journal de la Santé de Louis XIV.; Curiosités hist. sur Louis XIII., Louis XIV.*, &c.; Leroy, *Récit. de la grande opération.*

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 154–156.

1684, but she fell ill at Valenciennes, and was not present at the siege of Luxembourg. She longed for peace; this object seemed secured by the armistice of twenty years concluded at Ratisbon which sanctioned all that had taken place since Nimeguen. Louis XIV. reluctantly accepted it and thereupon carried out the long-cherished scheme which darkens his memory for ever.

The rise of Madame de Maintenon and her "unique position" coincide with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Her name is connected with this event, though nobody ever supposed that she had anything to say to the impending policy of reunions or to the larger scheme of annexations. They culminated in the occupation of Strasburg, which barred the passage over the Rhine, and of Casale, which commanded the line of the Po. They mark the zenith of the reign and of its diplomatic and military pre-eminence. Colbert had not resisted, and Louvois organised these territorial conquests. Louis XIV. identified himself with them and gloried in them. The triumph of absolute power was incomplete as long as Protestantism lived a life of its own. The suppression of heresy was the supreme demand which the French clergy never ceased to press upon the Most Christian King. He was told that Calvinism was dying out, that it had become a mere sect, that disloyalty to the Crown had survived controversies which had lost their meaning. Protestant theologians themselves, Caroline divines in England, moderate Lutherans in Germany, later teachers of Calvinism in France no longer upheld extreme doctrines. They admitted that Bossuet was right when he accused the Socinians, who were liberal Protestants, of undermining the foundations of Christianity itself.[1] The

[1] Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, i. "Louis XIV." pp. 244–248; T. Barruzzi, *Leibniz et l'organisation religieuse de la terre*, p. 192; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 316, note 2, Bossuet à Nicole, 7 Déc. 1691.

common danger made for conciliation. Men of different creeds—Grotius, Leibniz, Calixt, Spinola, Molanus—shared Bossuet's hopes for a reunion of Latin Christianity.[1] Bossuet's *Exposition de la Foi catholique*, which appeared in 1668, offered to Protestants the most far-reaching concessions they ever received. Ten years later, an enlightened Pope, Innocent XI., approved and encouraged these efforts. Bossuet, however, the author of the *Exposition*, was also the author of a *History of Protestant Variations*. He described a religious shipwreck. The only possible salvation for heresy was reconciliation with the Church. Bossuet had no tolerance for heretics who refused to be converted, and in such cases he fully approved of persecution. And religious persecution in Europe was by no means a thing of the past. The Duke of Savoy accepted military aid from Louis XIV. against the Waldenses who still survived in a few valleys of Piedmont. Catholics who had recourse to armed force against dissenters could argue in their defence that Jesuits and laymen were executed in London as traitors to the Protestant State. In February 1684 a Catholic Stuart succeeded Charles II. in England and the policy of Louis XIV. against the Huguenots entered a new phase.

From 1679 Port-Royal and the Jansenists were again threatened. The King's aversion for them manifested itself by open hostility. Moreover, he had assumed the leadership of the Gallican Church. His usurpation of ecclesiastical prerogative involved him in endless difficulties with Pope Innocent XI., who resisted him and openly sided with the enemies of France. Louis XIV., however, wanted the support of Rome. He held the pledge in his hands by which he could triumphantly assert his orthodoxy, even

[1] J. J. Döllinger, *Wiedervereinigungsversuche auf dem Continent im XVII. Jahrhdt.*, pp. 71, 76, 87.

against the Pope. It was the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Richelieu had respected it, Mazarin had acknowledged the loyalty of the Huguenots, who were the most industrious and prosperous people in France. Louis XIV. had repeatedly and solemnly pledged himself to maintain the Edict.[1] Before the Treaty of Nimeguen he broke his word. Colbert reluctantly imposed new taxations on the Huguenots; Le Tellier, Louvois' father, and Louvois himself advised measures of repression and carried them out. They were so severe that in 1681 Madame de Maintenon foresaw the inevitable extinction of Calvinism.[2] Louvois then organised his famous missions, the *Dragonnades*. The cruelties of a brutal soldiery were partly concealed from the King, who exulted over the conversion of whole populations.[3] The work of Le Tellier and Louvois had been so thoroughly done that the revocation of the Edict itself seemed a mere matter of form. On October 18, 1685, the deed was accomplished. Nothing was left to the Huguenots but the right of professing their religion in private. This right was also rendered illusory, because rebellious outbreaks, provoked by despair, again led to the severest repression.

A few bishops, the great Vauban, Elisabeth Charlotte, and, strange to say, the Dauphin, did not approve of the Revocation.[4] The nation applauded and the clergy glorified the King. At Le Tellier's death, Bossuet seized the opportunity of exalting Louis XIV. as "a second Constantine." Arnauld, although himself a victim of persecution, did not protest when it was practised against his adversaries. He and

[1] G. Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, iii. pp. 498, 502–503, 512.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 92, 200.
E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vii. 2, pp. 65–66, 72, 74.
[4] Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, xiv. livre 86, pp. 46, 55, 305; Abbé Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin, père de Louis XV.*, pp. 64–65; Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 28 Oct., 24 Nov. 1685.

Bossuet merely regretted that some of the measures were too harsh.[1] Innocent XI. thought so too; he objected that Our Lord Jesus Christ had not employed such methods of conversion: people had to be led into the temple, not dragged into it by force. But Catholic opinion proved too strong. In France the faithful found Innocent wanting in zeal; the Romans lit bonfires in honour of the Revocation, and the Pope's official congratulations had to be conveyed to the King.[2] The conciliatory efforts of the Pontificate were frustrated for ever.

When Voltaire wrote the history of Louis XIV. he found the opinion credited, that Madame de Maintenon was at least partly responsible for the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He scoffed at the notion of attributing the logical consequence of despotism to any person, least of all to a woman.[3] Voltaire is, on the whole, very fair to Madame de Maintenon, but he thought her timid and quite incapable of contradicting Louis XIV. Spanheim,[4] the Elector of Brandenburg's envoy, calls her bigoted, but sincerely pious, very intelligent, and honest-minded. He says that she really hoped to convert the Huguenots without using coercion. This is exactly what she says in a letter to her brother, written in 1672: "I beg of you not to be inhuman to the Huguenots, but to win them over by mildness; Jesus Christ gave us the example." Her feelings on the subject were so strong that Louis XIV. reprimanded her: "I fear," he said to her in 1685, "that your forbearance for Calvinists shows the

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. pp. 320–321; Brunetière, *Études critiques*, v. p. 212.

[2] F. X. Kraus, *Kirchengeschichte*, sec. clii. p. 650; Valéry, *Correspondance de Mabillon*, i. p. 192; J. J. Döllinger und Reusch, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten*, i. p. 186; Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 14 Juillet, 5 Août 1688.

[3] Voltaire, *Lettres;* à Formey, 17 jvier. 1753.

[4] E. Spanheim, *Relation de la Cour de France.*

POPE INNOCENT XI.

remains of attachment to your old faith."[1] If the King really suspected Madame de Maintenon's orthodoxy, she was soon able to justify herself, for she converted all her relations. Villette's wife was a Catholic, his two sons and his daughter were not; Madame de Maintenon sent for them and brought them over to Catholicism against their father's will. Villette, however, soon forgave his cousin's interference, became a Catholic himself, and made "conversions," with the result that it was she who advised moderation: "Neither before God nor before the King would I assume the responsibility of retarding conversions. But I am indignant when I see how they are brought about. Nothing is more shameful than abjuration without conviction." She never mentions the Revocation itself, but she recommends the purchase of the family property "on sale because of the despair of the Huguenots,"[2] and comforts herself with the hope that, if the abjurations of parents were insincere, at least their children would be brought up good Catholics.

In 1697 public calamity and defeat led to proposals for limited toleration. They were discussed in a memorandum submitted to Louis XIV., which she read and returned with annotations. Every concession, she says, will be interpreted as weakness. Therefore no change of system is advisable. Individuals ought to be leniently treated, children saved, sacrileges prevented. Rebellion must be punished and heresy destroyed. Yet it would be most unwise to make martyrs."[3]

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance genérale*, i. p. 167; ii. pp. 130, 140, note, 163, 202, 297; iv. p. 199; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 260.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, pp. 144, 152, 414, 425; iii. p. 90; iv. p. 199.

[3] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 260 ff.; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 199–206.

CHAPTER VII

SAINT-CYR—POPE INNOCENT XI.—THE STUARTS—THE WAR OF THE GRAND ALLIANCE

EDUCATION in every form was Madame de Maintenon's chief interest. Her special work was the establishment of schools for poor children, to which she devoted her pecuniary resources and her leisure. Madame de Brinon, a very intelligent woman, who had failed in her endeavours to found a religious community of her own, undertook the management of these schools. In one of the many letters addressed to her, Madame de Maintenon asks to be treated like one of the school-mistresses; she prepared refections for the community and little repasts for Madame de Brinon and herself; she was anxious to provide for the children's amusement and gave them religious instruction. She was truly fond of this kind of work, but she soon found that the most pressing need was for some institution for children of good family and small means, particularly for the children of officers who were responsible for the maintenance and the pay of their soldiers, and who were ruined by the wars. Subsequently Louis XIV. erected the Hôtel des Invalides as a refuge for them in their old age. Their sons were educated at his expense in military schools, but their daughters were not provided for. Madame de Maintenon determined to help them and appealed on their behalf to the King's generosity.

It was a long time before her plans took a definite shape. The King fully approved of the acquisition

of a property situated on the outskirts of the park of Versailles. It cost him three million francs. Mansard built the house, the architecture of which was very simple; it accommodated two hundred and fifty young girls and about sixty ladies entrusted with their education. The year of the foundation of Saint-Cyr is 1684; it has very appropriately been called the King's wedding present to Madame de Maintenon.[1]

The "Institut de Saint-Louis," as it was officially named, had to be organised. Both the King and Madame de Maintenon disliked convents. He was of opinion that too many of them existed already, that they went on multiplying without the help of the State, and that, as a rule, nuns were ignorant and narrow-minded.[2] Madame de Maintenon entirely agreed with him; she is most amusing when she speaks of some nuns she knows: "Je reviens plus assottée que jamais de nos petites sœurs," she writes in 1682; on another occasion she quotes the line:

> "Le premier citron qui fut confit le fut par un dévot."

Her contention was that nuns cared too much for money, that they were ridiculously prudish and somewhat foolish.[3] However, no female education was possible at that time without them, and Saint-Cyr from the beginning was more than half a convent, if it were not one strictly speaking. Its rules were partly drawn up by Madame de Maintenon herself, with the distinct object of promoting a more enlightened religious life. Her instructions to the ladies of Saint-Cyr on their vocation and their duties fill many volumes.[4] She insisted

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*, chap. iii.; Duc de Noailles, *Histoire de Madame de Maintenon*, iii. pp. 1–100.

[2] Louis XIV., *Instructions pour le Dauphin*, ii. p. 270.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 328, 364.

[4] *Mémoires des dames de Saint-Cyr;* Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres édifiantes*, 7 vols., 1740 (Languet de Gergy); E. Faguet, *Madame de Maintenon, Institutrice;* Gréard, *Madame de Maintenon*, &c.; Th. Lavallée, *Madame de Maintenon, Lettres et Entretiens sur l'éducation des filles*.

on truth and sincerity in all things, on reason and common sense as the safest guides of conduct. She perfectly realised that the training and sound education of the teachers themselves was the primary condition of success; she inspired them with an ideal of loving self-sacrifice, and taught them to rely on the efficacy, not of precept, but of example. She used to say that she would have felt more ashamed of giving offence to the little Duc du Maine than to anybody else. She cultivated a cheerful, happy disposition in all those who were entrusted to her care.

The formation of character was her chief aim; at Saint-Cyr the acquisition of mere knowledge was considered of secondary importance. Young girls usually stayed there till their twentieth year. They were then married with the help of a little dowry given them by the King. Those who did not marry often entered the community. As long as their education lasted, they were employed in the house and garden; the elder pupils taught the younger, and were trained in this way for household and family duties. Madame de Maintenon was not the person to foster illusions when she spoke to them of the married state. It was not the fault of the men, she said, if women had to serve and to obey. God had ordered it so. Nobody, not even the King, was free to do as he liked; and as for marriage, it was not meant for pleasure: "Et il n'y a pas de quoi rire."

She loved these young girls, spent every morning and all her free time with them, taught in their classes, made up the accounts, assisted the sick and the dying, presided over the community, and the only gift to which she made any pretence was a talent for education. Her whole heart belonged to Saint-Cyr.

The King became personally interested in it, went there from time to time, and had a little pavilion

constructed in the gardens for himself and Madame de Maintenon. His object was to make of these girls good Christians and good Frenchwomen. But Louis XIV. had to be amused wherever he went. Madame de Brinon, who governed the community till 1688, was not only very energetic, but also somewhat of a *bel-esprit*. She organised theatricals in honour of the King, in which the pupils of Saint-Cyr sang and acted plays composed by Madame de Brinon herself. Her talent fell short of her ambition and these performances were terribly dull. Madame de Maintenon, although she cared little for desultory learning, attached the highest possible value to the knowledge of French and was an expert in style. The classics were read and studied at Saint-Cyr with the object of teaching young girls to write a faultless prose.

After the failure of Madame de Brinon's dramatic efforts, Madame de Maintenon advised them to try and act real tragedies. Corneille's *Cinna*, Racine's *Iphigénie* and *Andromaque*, were produced on an improvised stage, in the presence of Louis XIV. and of a small audience. The young ladies failed to render Corneille's heroic pathos, but they were inspired by the harmonious verses of Racine. Madame de Maintenon reported to him how they had acted *Andromaque:* "So well, that they shall never play this or any other of your tragedies again." The King, however, had come to another conclusion. He had greatly enjoyed this successful venture, and when he saw that Madame de Maintenon objected to such worldly amusements for her pupils, he sent her with a message to Racine, with the purpose of getting him to write a play in which no love affair was to tempt the imagination of the youthful actors.

In 1679 Racine, who was at the height of his fame,

had created *Phädra.*[1] He had experienced the fascination of the stage; he had loved and been admired. Port-Royal, where he had been educated, remembered him as the model pupil of its schools, but had given him up long ago as one lost to the fold. In the cloister, his old aunt, one of the nuns, daily prayed for his conversion. Austere and pious men, who had been his teachers, condemned with Bossuet the nefarious examples given by playwrights and the theatre itself. Notwithstanding all his triumphs, Racine had come to know some of these perils; the public misunderstood, women were unfaithful, colleagues intrigued against him, rivals attacked him. He was estranged from his old masters, but their warnings lingered in his heart. In the full expansion of genius, he resolved to give up his art for ever, and come back to Port-Royal as a penitent. There he was advised to remain in the world and to marry, and he thereupon became the historiographer of the King, whom he worshipped with unbounded loyalty. When Madame de Maintenon asked Racine to do for the King's sake a thing he had solemnly forsworn, namely to write a new play, he obeyed. He went to Maintenon, and in the course of a single year, 1689, he composed *Esther.*[2] It had been settled between them that the play, intended for Saint-Cyr, should contain no love interest.

It was acted before an audience of Kings. The dethroned James II., who had sought refuge in France, was present with his Queen, Mary of Modena. Louis XIV. himself acted as usher, holding a stick in his hands which he used as a barrier. He also provided the orchestra, the costumes and the decorations. Racine had coached the actors, and many

[1] J. Lemaître, *Racine*, pp. 290–300; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 135; Gazier, *Revue hebdomadaire*, 18th Jvier. 1908.

[2] Jules Lemaître, *Racine*, *Conférences*, p. 298 ff.; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 135 ff.

tears had been shed before he declared himself satisfied.

One of these actors was a young bride of seventeen, Mademoiselle de Villette, whom Madame de Maintenon had married shortly before to the Comte de Caylus. This union was most unfortunate, and seems to have been suggested to Madame de Maintenon by the desire to keep her adopted niece with her. Caylus developed into a drunkard, and saw little of his wife.[1] Madame de Caylus was bewitching, and happened to be a first-rate actress. Her extraordinary charm and her talent contributed not a little to the unparalleled success of *Esther*. The drama was acted six times in rapid succession. Bossuet, La Chaize, in company with several Jesuits, and the most distinguished people in Paris were among the audience. Madame de Miramion, "the mother of the poor," left her solitude to see *Esther*. Madame de Sévigné was of opinion that Madame de Caylus outshone the famous actress, La Champmeslé, and that Racine had surpassed himself. Even men were moved to tears. The interest of the play, moreover, was enhanced by allusions to recent events. When King Assuérus took the fainting Esther into his arms and said to her, "Am I not thy brother?" everybody understood the meaning of these words. The high priest, "who never bent to tyranny," was suspiciously like the great Arnauld. The cruel minister of the Persian monarch resembled Louvois. The fate of the proud Vasti, Esther's mortal enemy, too strikingly resembled that of Madame de Montespan. The incomparable choirs of the drama, which implored Heaven's aid for innocent victims of persecution, was the poet's own eloquent pleading for his beloved Port-Royal.

Anonymous letters, warnings, and reproaches were

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, notice de Mr. de Lescure, p. 18.

showered upon Madame de Maintenon. People predicted disaster if young girls were going to be spoilt by ovations. She thought so herself when Racine, twelve months after the completion of *Esther*, presented *Athalie* to Louis XIV. It was acted in private, first at Saint-Cyr, then several times at Versailles, without a stage and without costumes. The success of Racine's grandest work did not equal the triumph which had attended *Esther*. The best judges in literary matters—Fénelon, Boileau and Madame de Maintenon herself—never doubted for a moment that *Athalie* was the poet's masterpiece, and that its sombre beauty was unique.

In 1702, years after Racine's death, ladies and gentlemen acted *Athalie* once more at Versailles. The audience was not carried away, and Madame de Maintenon's disappointment expressed itself in bitter words: "Our pleasure is spoilt. I don't know what the world was like before I knew it, but since I have, it has been like this. . . . What an ungrateful task to have to provide for the amusement of the great! Bad luck attends everything I love." She spoke in a depressed mood, for *Athalie* was never considered a failure. The genius of Racine shed its glory over Saint-Cyr and gave it a place of honour in the history of French literature. Two generations later Frederic the Great went so far as to say that he would rather have produced *Athalie* than fought the Seven Years' War.[1] The poet's fame outlived the French monarch's conquests, for there is no sign of a diminished enthusiasm in the homage paid to his immortal art.

After the episode which connected it with Racine, Saint-Cyr underwent a transformation. The first superior, Madame de Brinon, had lofty ideals. She worked for the reunion of the Churches, corresponded with Leibniz and Bossuet, and showed a spirit of

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 150, note 1.

independence which was out of place in an establishment over which Madame de Maintenon reigned supreme. In 1688 she was dismissed by order of Louis XIV., and younger superiors, with no will of their own, were elected.[1]

Madame de Brinon, however, remained on good terms with Madame de Maintenon and found a refuge at Maubuisson, a monastery whose circumstances are characteristic of the time. Its abbess was a daughter of the Winter King and aunt of Elisabeth Charlotte, who loved her, and has drawn a portrait of the charming lady in her old age.[2] Her youth had been rather stormy; her life became regular and even austere when she became a Catholic and a nun and was placed at the head of the house which Angélique Arnauld had reformed in bygone days. Louise Hollandine was an artist, and painted portraits to perfection; she never spoke to her nuns except to give them orders, and her private attendant was a mute, so that she was saved the trouble of talking to her. Madame de Brinon's society must have proved a relief to a lady who delighted in clever conversation and gave her no reason to regret Saint-Cyr. Soon after her dismissal, Rome interfered; Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon consented to the very change which they had wanted to avoid, and Saint-Cyr became a regular convent.

It was in the King's interest to meet the new Pope's wishes after years of conflict with his predecessor, Innocent XI. This pontiff, an Odescalchi, had ascended the papal throne in 1676. Till his

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*, chap. vii. pp. 92, 93; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 168, 190–191, 232–233; T. Baruzzi, *Leibniz*, &c., pp. 260, 289, 340.

[2] *Lettres de la duchesse d'Orléans*, &c., coll. Brunet, i. pp. 39–40, 414; coll. Jaegle, i. pp. 207–208, 217–218; *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie.*

death, in 1689, he remained hostile to Louis XIV., whose provocations he met with relentless energy.

These began in 1673. The King of France had a right to appropriate the revenue of bishoprics during the vacancy of sees, but only in certain provinces. This right, the Régale, he extended to provinces where it had not previously existed. Rome was not consulted. Innocent XI. would not tolerate this act of despotism, and Louis XIV. was confronted with opposition in his own Church. The chief leaders of this opposition were the Port-Royalist bishops, Pavillon and Caulet, who were not afraid of persecution. They appealed to the Pope in defence of their episcopal rights. Old enmities revived; the King dismissed Pomponne, one of his best ministers, because he was an Arnauld. Arnauld, who had retired to Holland, published a treatise against the King's policy,[1] and died in 1694 in voluntary exile. The community of Port-Royal was condemned to extinction by the King's prohibition to receive novices. The Jurists and Parliamentarians, the majority of the clergy and of the episcopacy, and even the French Jesuits, sided with the King.[2]

In 1681 he convoked an extraordinary Assembly of the French clergy under the presidency of Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris, and obtained its consent to the extension of the Régale. This affair was comparatively of secondary importance and might have been peacefully settled if the most momentous questions of principle had not been involved in the controversy.

On March 19, 1682, the Assembly adopted four articles, which expressed the Gallican doctrine. They affirmed that the Pope has neither a direct nor an

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 313; *Lettre*, &c., 1680; *Considérations*, &c., 1681.

[2] P. M. Lauras, S.J., *Nouveaux éclaircissements sur l'Assemblée de 1682*, pp. 23–26, 133; Cardinal de Beausset, *Histoire de Bossuet*, i. p. 188.

indirect authority over the secular power; that the Council was above the Pope; that the exercise of the apostolic power was regulated by canonical law, which did not infringe on the liberties of the Gallican Church; that the Pope had the right to decide in matters of faith, but that his decisions were irrevocable only after their acceptance by the Church. The author of the four articles was Bossuet, who in 1681 had exchanged his bishopric of Condom for that of Meaux. They became laws of the State by sanction of the *Parlement*.

In May a papal brief condemned the decision of the Assembly with regard to the Régale. Innocent XI. further retaliated by refusing the canonical institution to all members of the Assembly nominated to bishoprics by the King.

Innocent XI. was an austere pontiff, who reformed the Curia. Among the abuses which made law and order impossible in Rome itself were the franchises of ambassadors. The sovereigns agreed to give them up; Louis XIV. alone refused to do so; his new ambassador, the Marquis de Lavardin, appeared in Rome with eight hundred armed men, took possession of his embassy, and was excommunicated by the Pope. Further trouble between him and Louis XIV. was brought about by the French King's interference when the see of Cologne became vacant. For political reasons he wanted his staunch ally, Fürstenberg, Bishop of Strasburg, to become Elector of Cologne. The German princes preferred Clement of Bavaria, brother of the Dauphine, who was finally elected. Louis XIV. thereupon seized Avignon and threatened to invade Italy.

In France the Pope was fiercely attacked. Denis Talon, the head of the French parliamentary bar, pronounced him to be tainted with Jansenist heresy.[1]

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 477; Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, 14 Juillet, 5 Août 1688; Döllinger u. Reusch, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten*, &c., i. pp. 36–37, 131–140, 186; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. pp. 179, 289, 291, 477.

His peaceful intentions towards Protestants were well known, as was also his detestation of the French King's secular policy. He held Louis XIV. responsible for the failure of his grandest project, the crusade of Christian princes against the Turks. He was horrified at the reunions and at the violences perpetrated against the Genoese Republic. He utterly disagreed with the tactics of Louis XIV. in England, whereby he aimed at keeping this realm subservient to France and securing her alliance by secret understandings like the famous Treaty of Dover. As long as Charles II. reigned he was in the pay of Louis XIV., who also gave money to the opposition in the British Parliament for the purpose of keeping Charles in order.

The accession of James II., who openly professed Catholicism, was contemporary with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and encouraged the most ambitious hopes for the conversion of England also. English Catholics obtained toleration, but toleration had no meaning for Louis XIV. Better things could be expected if James II. became an absolute monarch, like the King of France, and this was the real object of James himself. Louis XIV. urged him on. After the birth of the Prince of Wales, James felt strong enough to attack the Established Church, which had always been loyal to the Stuarts. The arbitrary measures to which James now resorted against its bishops led to the catastrophe. The liberties of England were threatened. English patriots secretly sent envoys to the King's son-in-law, William of Orange, and asked him to come over and save the country. William was the French King's ablest and most relentless foe. He was the ally of the Emperor and the soul of the coalition against France. Yet it was doubtful whether the Emperor Leopold would consent to substitute a Protestant for a Catholic dynasty in England. William of Orange opened secret

negotiations with Innocent XI., and pledged himself to secure religious toleration. Innocent XI. disagreed quite as fundamentally with James II. as he did with Louis XIV. James at heart was French in politics; he was a Gallican in Church questions; he had Jesuit favourites whom the Pope knew to be unworthy, and his refusal to promote one of them to the rank of cardinal had been answered by James with the threat that he could do without Rome. He turned a deaf ear to the Nuncio's entreaties not to provoke an inner crisis and rushed to his doom.

Innocent XI. was firmly convinced of the hopelessness of the struggle, which tended towards absolutism in Church and State. He knew that a return of England to the old faith could not be brought about by coercion, and for all these reasons he found it advisable to be content with the promise of religious toleration as the only possible solution. Chiefly through the Pope's influence, the Emperor Leopold sided with William of Orange. The Revolution of 1688 changed the situation in Europe and brought about the signal defeat of French policy. Twenty years of ceaseless intrigue, millions spent for the purpose of securing the alliance, or, failing that, the neutrality of England, had been unavailing. When Louis XIV. broke the truce of Ratisbon, he was confronted by the league of Augsburg, concluded in 1686 between the Emperor, part of the Empire, Spain, Sweden, and the Netherlands. In 1688 William of Orange, to whom Parliament gave the crown, threw the weight of England into the scales, and the war that ensued became the war of "the Grand Alliance."[1] Madame de Maintenon's sympathies were for the dethroned Stuart, whose cause

[1] Macaulay, *History of England*, ed. 1860, ii. pp. 307, 331, 526, 531; Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, i. pp. 219, 247; E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vii. /2; *Cambridge Modern History*, v. "Louis XIV.," chap. x.; Ranke, *Works*, France, England.

was to her that of religion itself. She had means of information which might have dispelled some of her illusions. Barillon, the French ambassador in London, was an old friend of hers. It was due to his timely interference that Charles II. on his deathbed had been enabled to see a priest and to die a Catholic. James could rely on him, but would not listen when the cautious diplomatist warned him against the policy which led to his destruction. Barillon himself, however, did not foresee the Revolution, and after the King's flight William of Orange ordered him to leave England within twenty-four hours. It was well known how in former days he had been in love with Madame de Maintenon, and wanted to marry her. "Was I wrong?" he said, when they met at Versailles.[1] Yet it is difficult to believe that, because of her, Barillon, who was sixty and had a wife, should have died broken-hearted a few years after his return.[2]

Madame de Maintenon's loyalty to the fallen dynasty, her veneration for the exiled Queen, which amounted to worship, were in accordance with popular feelings. William was execrated in France, where the events which led to the crisis in England were ignored or misunderstood. The personal failings of James belonged to the past; he had been dethroned by his own daughter, and this tragic event excited universal pity and a romantic interest.

Louis XIV. was admired and applauded when he went forth in state to meet the fugitive Queen and the little Prince of Wales, and with chivalrous courtesy conducted them to Saint-Germain, where everything was prepared for their reception. When James arrived on the following day, Louis welcomed him with tender emotion, like an old and valued friend. He gave

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 114.

[2] *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, &c.; Ranke, *Franz. Geschichte*, v. p. 370.

precedence to the royal pair, and had them informed that, as long as they would do the King of France the favour of accepting his hospitality, all their expenses would be paid them from his treasury. They amounted to a yearly sum of over a million francs.

When James went over to Ireland in that same year, 1689, to try and redeem his fortunes, Louis XIV. gave him money, arms and officers, and subsequently sent an auxiliary force. His fleet, under Tourville's command, supported the expedition, and the victory of Beachy Head, June 30, 1690, made him master of the Channel. On the following day James was defeated in the battle of the Boyne. Ireland was lost through the same illusions and the same faults which had cost him England and Scotland, and he came back a fugitive to Saint-Germain. His royal host had parted from him with the farewell words that the best wish he could make was not to meet him again in this world; but that, if any evil chance should force him to return, he would find him unchanged. The promise was kept; James heard not a word which could sound like reproach, and experienced, as he had done before, the French King's kindness and liberality.[1]

In 1690 the monarch's evil genius, Louvois, was still minister. Louis XIV. governed for many years with two dynasties of statesmen. Le Tellier, the Chancellor, and his son Louvois, counterbalanced the influence of the Colberts. After the great Colbert's death, the King kept his sons in office. One of them, Seignelay, died in 1690; the other, Croissy, better known as Marquis de Torcy, an excellent man, who trained himself into a first-rate diplomatist, remained in the King's service to the end of his reign. Louvois became all-powerful after Colbert's death. His antagonism to Madame de Maintenon, real or supposed,

[1] Macaulay, *History of England*, iii. pp. 344–347; iv. pp. 172–182; v. pp. 262–283.

is one of Saint-Simon's favourite topics. Louvois and Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, prevented her, so he says, from making public her marriage with the King. He then describes a terrible scene between the monarch and his minister. The latter having proposed to burn down the city of Treves, the King attacked him with a pair of fire-tongs, and Madame de Maintenon threw herself between them to prevent a catastrophe.[1] La Fare asserts that she reconciled the minister with the monarch. Choisy accuses her of treachery against him, because he sided with Madame de Montespan.[2] He and Madame de Maintenon were certainly not friends and it is to her credit that his sinister policy was odious to her. But the King himself had got tired of Louvois and would have dismissed him, when he was suddenly struck by apoplexy in July 1691. "He was a healthy man when he passed through the gallery to go and die," she says. She did not mourn for "this man," and she never knew that Elisabeth Charlotte suspected her of having poisoned him.[3]

Louis XIV. recalled Pomponne to the Foreign Office; Barbezieux, the son of Louvois, succeeded him at the War Office, but not until Chamlay, the King's real adviser for all military operations, had refused the appointment.[4] The King now worked daily for three or four hours longer with his Secretaries of State and was his own Prime Minister. From 1690 he had five armies in the field—on the Rhine and the Moselle, in Flanders, Dauphiné and Catalonia.

The fortress of Mons being considered all-important

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiii. p. 133; La Fare, *Mémoires*, p. 268, 1691.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 306; Choisy, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 326–328.

[3] Brunet, *Correspondance complète*, i. p. 227; Holland, *Briefe*, &c.; *Bibl. des lit. Vereins*, Bd. cxxii. p. 458.

[4] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 266, note 1, 277, 278, note 1; xii. pp. 36–37.

for France, he joined his army in March 1691, when everything was ready for the siege. Madame de Maintenon had retired to Saint-Cyr, where she intended to remain during his absence. Before he left, the King went there and told the nuns that he entrusted to them his dearest treasure.[1] The Duc du Maine and his brother, the Comte de Toulouse, a boy of thirteen, accompanied him. By his order, Madame de Montespan's youngest daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois, passed out of her mother's hands into those of Madame de Montchevreuil. This was more than Madame de Montespan would stand, and through Bossuet she asked the King's permission to leave the Court for ever. The readiness with which the request was granted increased the bitterness of her grief. Du Maine behaved badly to his mother, and took possession of her apartments with indecent haste, while D'Antin, her legitimate son, was very fond of her. Her husband having refused to take her back, she spent the rest of her life in penance and retirement. Nearly everything she had went to the poor. The generation to which she belonged did not lower itself to sophisms, but frankly confessed when it had sinned, and Madame de Montespan's rare visitors were struck by her penitent yet dignified behaviour. The fear of death, which had tormented her, did not darken her end, which occurred in 1707.[2] When those who surrounded the King showed surprise at the indifference with which he received the news, he quietly observed that, like Madame de la Vallière, Madame de Montespan had been dead for him long ago. She and Madame de Maintenon had parted in peace, but they never saw each other again. Messages

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Madame de Maintenon et la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*, p. 177; Dangeau, *Journal*, iii. p. 387, &c.; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 206–207.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 128.

of a friendly character were conveyed by the Abbess of Fontevrault, but Madame de Montespan's endeavours to keep up relations with her former friend were frustrated by her.[1]

From Flanders the King wrote constantly to Madame de Maintenon and sent her reports about his two sons, whose conduct he praised. The recklessness with which he exposed himself made her tremble. After the fall of Mons, which was surrendered by its inhabitants, she went as far as Compiègne to meet him. A year after, he took the field again at the head of his nobility, accompanied by the princesses of the blood and a splendid train of ladies, which included Madame de Maintenon. In the neighbourhood of Mons they witnessed a magnificent review of a hundred and twenty thousand men, the finest troops in Europe. The King's object was to attack Namur, the stronghold which had never opened its gates to the enemy. The siege was directed by Vauban whilst Luxembourg was in command of the army which kept William of Orange at bay. Rains and inundations increased the hardships of the troops, whom the King's presence and authority inspired with cheerful readiness to bear everything for his sake.

The ladies, who were quartered in the neighbourhood, at Dinant, had their full share of the privations attending a campaign. An amusing and graphic account of her experiences was addressed by Madame de Maintenon to one of her friends at Saint-Cyr: "Just imagine that yesterday, after six hours' journey on a fairly good road, we saw a castle built on a rock, which we thought to be inhabitable. When we came nearer, we discovered at its foot a number of roofs looking out of what seemed an abyss or a deep well.

[1] *Bibliothèque du Louvre*, iii., 2de série, *Correspondance des Noailles, vingt-sept lettres de Madame de Montespan*, 1691–1707; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 306.

Then only did we see the cottages, which looked exactly as if they were dolls' houses. They were surrounded by steep rocks of the colour of iron. We had to drive down into this horrible abode; the ladies caught hold of everything within their reach so as to prevent themselves from tumbling over while our coaches jolted and creaked. This torment lasted a quarter of an hour, at the close of which we were deposited in a street called the High Street, but so narrow that two carriages cannot pass each other. There are other streets, too narrow for two sedan chairs. They are perfectly dark, the houses are frightful, the water detestable. Bakers have strict orders to bake for the soldiers only, so that our servants can't get any bread. A chicken costs thirty pence apiece in its feathers; meat costs eight pence, and is very bad; all the provisions go to the army. Since our arrival it has rained without interruption, and the heat would be unbearable on account of the radiation from those rocks. So far I have seen two churches; they are on the first floor, and visited merely out of civility; the music at benediction is very bad; the incense is so profuse and so perfumed that people can't see each other through the smoke and very few heads are able to stand it. Besides, the town is one mass of mud, the pavement so rough that it cuts one's feet, and the streets seem to me to serve all purposes for all men. My maid is of opinion that the King is wrong in conquering towns such as these, and that he would do better by far to leave them to his enemies. . . . This beautiful place trembles at the sound of cannon, and to make our happiness complete, we hear nothing else but the firing of shots and explosions. After having given you this delightful account of our present condition, I beg of you not to worry about me. I occupy one of the best lodgings, I am very well served,

and perfectly satisfied to be where it pleases Heaven to put me. Four hundred steps lead up to the castle of which I spoke. . . . If it were possible, I would like to assume for a time the martial spirit which makes you long for the pleasures of war. You would be delighted to smell tobacco, to hear the beating of drums, to eat nothing but cheese, to see nothing but bastions and trenches; to triumph, in one word, over the sensuality and the temptations which your courage despises. I am very womanish, and were I able to do so, I would gladly give you my place and work at my embroidery in the midst of my friends."[1]

She was not sorry to hear that the King was disabled by a severe attack of gout and could not expose himself to the enemy's fire as he used to do. She obtained his pardon for a Dutch lady of rank who was implicated in a conspiracy for handing over the fortress of Mons to William of Orange. Unfortunately the King's pardon came too late and the lady was beheaded. Madame de Maintenon took her two daughters under her protection and sent them to Saint-Cyr. In a truly admirable letter she entreated her nuns to make up by their charity for the scandalous behaviour of religious communities, like the Jesuits and others, who refused to help in such cases. "Nothing," she says, "is more wicked than to visit the parents' sins on innocent beings, whom it is a duty to pity and to love."

In the meantime Louis XIV. heard sinister tidings. In 1692 James II. was more than ever convinced that England was bent on a Restoration. William was in the Netherlands. Louis XIV. yielded to the importunity of James, and an army composed of Irish and French regiments stood ready for an invasion in a camp formed on the coast of Normandy. Admiral Tourville received positive orders to protect

[1] Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 239, 245.

the descent on the British shore, and not to decline a battle. He obeyed, and met the allied Dutch and English fleet at La Hougue Saint-Waast. On May 29, 1692, the English gained over the French "the first great victory since the day of Agincourt." James witnessed the disaster from his post of observation on a cliff near the coast, and is said to have exulted over the bravery of the gallant English seamen he had once commanded.[1]

Louis XIV., while he lay before Namur, could hear the salutes fired in the camp of the Allies in honour of the victory of La Hougue. He did not flinch. "They make a strange noise," he said, "about the burning of a few ships." He made Tourville a marshal, and expressed himself perfectly satisfied with him and his sailors when he graciously received him at Versailles. His own operations had been crowned with success; the town surrendered on the eighth day of the siege, the citadel about three weeks later and his enemies did him the justice to say that he did not abuse his victory.[2]

The most splendid military exploit of his life was destined to be his last. He never again commanded his armies after his return from Flanders in July 1692.

About a week after Luxembourg's victory over the Allies at Steenkerk on August 3, a French officer, Grandval, who made no defence, and owned that he had deserved death, was hanged in the camp of the Allies. He left behind him a few lines, in which he declared that Barbezieux had ordered him to make away with William of Orange, and the Whigs never doubted that both Louis XIV. and James were partakers in his guilt. Grandval did not mention other names. But Dumont, a Walloon adventurer, and one of the

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 45, 52, 166.
[2] Macaulay, *History of England*, vi. p. 281.

two men who betrayed Grandval, brought an accusation against Madame de Maintenon. The story is hidden in a footnote to the account of the plot given by Macaulay in his *History of England*.[1]

[1] Macaulay, *History of England*, vi. p. 297, note 1; Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, i. p. 222.

CHAPTER VIII

FÉNELON

Madame de Maintenon spent her happiest hours in close intimacy with Colbert's family. One of his daughters was married to the Duc de Beauvillier, the other to the Duc de Chevreuse. Beauvillier was at the head of the Council of Finance, he was made a member of the great Council of State after Louvois' death, and he also presided over the household of the three sons of the Dauphin. His austere piety made him indifferent to worldly advantages, and his very faults endeared him to his royal master. He was shy, timid, unselfish to a degree, pedantic, and painstaking, the model of a good official but not of a statesman. In worldly matters he rarely gave his opinion; of initiative he had none, but when his conscience was roused he showed courage and decision, and never cared for consequences. His reverence for the King "amounted to idolatry"; his ardent, somewhat narrow and scrupulous piety fitted him more for a convent than for a court; he was universally respected, but too prudent and diffident to exert real influence. His brother-in-law Chevreuse and he "had but one heart and one soul," says Saint-Simon, who loved and admired them both. Intellectually, Chevreuse was by far superior to Beauvillier, and no less devout, very able, well-informed, witty and original, "the greatest distiller of quintessences there ever was." His aim to obey in every emergency the dictates of reason did not prevent him from delighting in paradoxes. He

ruined his health and his property according to the strictest axioms of mathematics and would have died a beggar but for the King. Louis XIV. did not give him office, but he consulted him about most things, tolerated his erratic habits, spent hours in conversation with him, and listened to his plans, unpractical as he knew them to be.[1] Madame de Chevreuse was no less adored than her husband by everybody who knew them. She had virtue, charm, beauty, unfailing tact, and all the social qualities which were conspicuously wanting in other members of the family. They all led a retired life. Madame de Beauvillier, who was one of the most distinguished and cleverest women of her time, deliberately restricted herself to the education of her ten children and to good works; she shared all her husband's interests, and could not help being amusing and indulging sometimes in the caustic wit which her piety taught her to control.

This family circle of saintly men and women could not fail to attract Madame de Maintenon in every way. She dined with them regularly once or twice a week; they had a bell on the table, so as not to be disturbed by servants when they discussed the subjects they had nearest at heart—religious interests and the King's concerns.

When he made Beauvillier Governor of the little Duc de Bourgogne he gave him full powers to choose his staff of teachers. Beauvillier was gazetted on August 20, 1689; on the same day Abbé de Fénelon was appointed preceptor to the Prince. Bossuet, when he heard of his elevation, spoke of it as a blessing to Church and State, and people began to extol the rare merit, knowledge and piety of the young Prince's mentor.

Yet the world at large knew hardly anything about a man who had kept aloof from publicity.

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 58, 255; ix. pp. 349, 350, 382, 383.

François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon was born on August 6, 1651, as the younger son of an illustrious but poor family, which had distinguished itself in the service of the State. He lost his parents at an early age and was adopted by his uncle, an excellent man, who advised him to prepare for the priesthood in the seminary of Saint-Sulpice. Very little is known about the ten years which he spent there. However, it is certain that his ecclesiastical vocation was real and that he looked upon this time of probation as the happiest of his life. After his ordination, he cherished the idea of going as a missionary to the Levant, but gave it up in deference to the wishes of his family. Soon afterwards he was appointed superior of a religious community, Les Nouvelles Catholiques. The inmates of the convent were Protestant girls recently converted, who had to be convinced and encouraged. Fénelon succeeded so well that he was entrusted in 1686 and 1687 with missions to Poitou and Saintonge, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, with which he fully agreed. The legend which transformed Fénelon into an apostle of toleration dissolves in the light of his own utterances at the very beginning of his career. He encouraged the Government "to use rigour against deserters"; he denounced those among its officers who were wanting in zeal; he had the worst possible opinion of the heretics themselves, whom he calls obstinate, venal, and cowardly.[1] Nevertheless, there are distinct traces of his compromising attitude on minor points of doctrine, of his patience and mildness towards individuals. He brought suspicion on his head because he would not force the sacraments on them, not drive them to desperation and sacrilege and "incur a horrible malediction by being content to do

[1] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, ii. p. 196, &c.; ix. p. 216; O. Douen, *L'Intolérance de Fénelon*, pp. 11, 66, 81, 120, 328–335.

hastily a superficial work for the sake of mere outward success."[1] For the main issue, the extirpation of heresy, he could be relied on.

Soon after his return to Paris he became acquainted with the Beauvilliers. Madame de Beauvillier, who had eight daughters, begged of him to give her rules for their guidance; he consented to do so, and wrote a treatise on the *Education of Girls*. It is the first serious book ever written on the subject, and one of the best.[2] Fénelon insists on the necessity of a sound mental training; he starts from the principle that the duties of women are not restricted to the family, but that they concern the State; his object is not merely to educate and to instruct, but to make young girls happy. The virtue which he preaches is not austere; its safeguards are dignity and reason. There is a curious passage in which he advises them to consult artists and to imitate the noble simplicity of the ancients in their dress and outward appearance.

The treatise on the *Education of Girls* decided Fénelon's future, whilst his personal charm and his superiority conquered his patrons. They became his lifelong disciples; he was to them "the soul of their souls." Saint-Simon, who did not like him, describes his winning outward appearance, and how the fire of genius blazed in his eyes. There was an innate nobility about him and the purity of his life commanded respect. Nobody ever dared suspect the reputation of Fénelon. He combined moral qualities and intellectual gifts which seem contradictory and baffle the shrewdest psychologists, who alternately admire and condemn, but rarely or never understand him.

The surmise that his ambition aimed at nothing less than the first post in the State rests on solid grounds. Yet it is equally certain that he deliberately

[1] P. Janet, *Fénelon*, pp. 12–17.
[2] O. Gréard, *Fénelon—Education des filles*, Introduction.

ruined his prospects because he would neither sacrifice his convictions nor his friendships. In practical questions he was as worldly wise as most people, and at the same time he was a mystic in theology. He competed with Malebranche as a philosopher, and Humanists might have envied his classical culture. His mind was so steeped in Greek thought that Plato would have acknowledged him as a disciple. He had a pagan sense of enjoyment in mere sensual beauty and a Christian's restraint in the chastened expression of human passions. The scenery in *Télémaque* appeals to modern taste, and the æsthetic doctrine of Fénelon is far in advance of his age. His style is an enchantment to the ear; in his most elaborate compositions no effort is apparent, and the harmonious flow of his diction lightens the burden of abstract thought.

The same powers which made him a great author gave him a wonderful gift of adaptation. Children and women, ignorant people and scholars, men of the world and statesmen he understood equally well and met on their own ground. No man fulfilled more thoroughly the precept of being all things to all men.

In ecclesiastical and in political matters Fénelon went his own way. To please Louis XIV., French Jesuits had become Gallicans. Bossuet, the defender of Gallican doctrine, tolerated the monarch's interference with his clergy. Fénelon invariably held the doctrine of Saint-Sulpice, which was Roman and ultramontane.[1]

He would not admit the despotism of the Crown, either in Church or State; early in life he outlined a programme of reform, the principles of which anticipated not a few of the humanitarian ideas of the eighteenth century. There are indications that at one time Fénelon thought it possible to

[1] Döllinger u. Reusch, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten*, i. p. 105; Reusch, *Geschichte des Index*, &c., ii. pp. 2, 351, 362, 561.

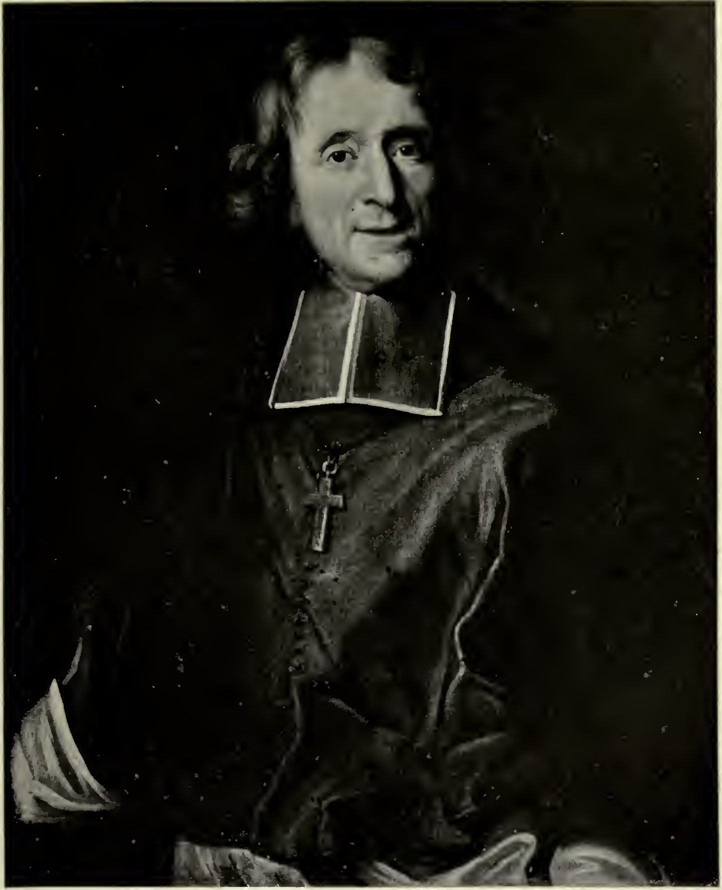
win over Louis XIV. himself to the idea of a change of system. Yet he had a poor opinion of the King, who in his turn hardly noticed the silent observer to whom he had entrusted the heir to his crown.

Fénelon soon gave up all hope of striking at the absolutism which he abhorred while Louis XIV. reigned. But the King was mortal; the future might be saved. The daring enterprise, conceived and carried out by Fénelon, was to work the ruin of despotism in the soul of the despot's successor.

The Duc de Bourgogne was seven years old when this experiment began. He was "born terrible," says Saint-Simon.[1] His health was frail; the clumsy efforts of surgeons to set one of his shoulders right had injured his constitution. His nerves reacted on his temper. Contradiction made him furious. His pride, his insolence, his contempt for mankind, his love of pleasure and enjoyment, were indescribable. Yet he was absolutely truthful; he scorned flattery, and his mental gifts, which were far above the average, his quickness, his penetration and sensibility, made him amenable to reason. Six years of the hardest physical training gave him nerves of iron and enabled him to stand every fatigue, and his soul was conquered by Fénelon. Men marvelled at the change which transformed the rebellious, unmanageable boy into a generous, mild, self-controlled, and amiable youth, who was severe to himself and considerate to others. Fénelon could now inspire him with the passionate resolve to promote human happiness, "to be the father, not the master, of his future subjects." Such an ideal could not be reached if Bourgogne submitted to other influences, if he had not an unbending will of his own. He was heir-apparent to the crown when the exiled Fénelon wrote to Beauvillier:

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. pp. 370–376; ix. pp. 209–227; xiv. pp. 90–99.

CALIFORNIA



FÉNELON
From the portrait by Rigaud

"For God's sake, do not let the Dauphin be governed by anybody, either by yourself or by me." Was this still possible, or was such a triumph of education won at the expense of the pupil's initiative? The later career of the Duc de Bourgogne, his written records, show that although he lost Fénelon's guidance when not thirteen years old, he remained to the end "his mentor's Télémaque," and that his energy was impaired.[1] The model sovereign after Fénelon's own heart was not destined to reign, and the problem as to how he would have fulfilled his lofty expectations was buried in an early grave.

Madame de Maintenon made Fénelon's acquaintance at the Beauvilliers, and was carried away by his superiority. His educational work appealed to all her sympathies; his theories were more liberal than her own, but they had many points in common, and the community at Saint-Cyr was advised to read Fénelon: "I have never seen anything more tender, more sterling, more free; his spirit of devotion is indeed the right one."[2] She admired his methods with Bourgogne. One day the little Prince rebelled against his preceptor: "I know who I am," he said to him, "and I know who you are." Fénelon did not answer, but next morning he told the Prince how wrong he was to suppose that he was not his superior, except by birth, which was of no account in the case, and that he was going to take him to the King and entreat the monarch in his presence to nominate another preceptor. He would not listen to his pupil's tears and supplications, and only seemed to relent at the instance

[1] Paul Mesnard, *Projets de gouvernement du duc de Bourgogne;* De Vogüé, *Correspondance du duc de Bourgogne avec le duc de Beauvillier*, Introduction; D'Haussonville, *La Duchesse de Bourgogne*, i. p. 384; *Mémoire de Madame de Maintenon sur les vertus du duc de Bourgogne.*

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 199, 201, 253–254; Masson, "Correspondance spirituelle de Fénelon avec Madame de Maintenon," *Revue d'Histoire litt. de France*, Janvier 1906.

of Madame de Maintenon.[1] She was in trouble about her *directeur*. Abbé Gobelin had grown old, and her elevation, to which he had contributed by entreating her not to leave the Court, evidently affected his behaviour towards her. She tried in vain to make him change it: "I am no greater a lady than I was in the days when you knew so well how to tell me the truth," she wrote to him. "The guide of my soul ought not to be dazzled by the change in my fortune which lays the world at my feet. Where am I to find the truth, if not with you? Whom shall I obey, surrounded as I am by flattery, by demonstrations of respect and submission? I implore you to alter the tone which offends me, and not to fear that your words will ever hurt me or be misunderstood. I want to work out my salvation and to belong to God. You are responsible for my soul."[2] But Abbé Gobelin was unable to forget what she had written to him in 1683: "Pray for me; I want strength to make a good use of my happiness."[3] He did not rise to the occasion. Madame de Maintenon then addressed herself to Bourdaloue. The Jesuit wrote several letters to her and gave the most edifying instructions, but he had no time for more, and their relations were transitory.[4] From 1690 she corresponded with Fénelon, whom she introduced to Saint-Cyr and felt strongly inclined to choose him for her director.[5] He answered her request to him to point out her faults with a frankness which, on his lips, was more welcome than praise. "You are natural and open-hearted," he said. "Your conduct with those you like is perfect, but with the others you are cold and distant. . . . Your love of

[1] P. Janet, *Fénelon*, p. 42.
[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 171, 176.
[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. p. 323, 20 Sept. 1683.
[4] Ibid., iii. p. 156.
[5] Masson, "Correspondance spirituelle de Fénelon avec Madame de Maintenon," *Revue d'Hist. litt. de France*, 1906.

glory and of self is not extinct. You are over-fond of the esteem of good people, of their approbation, of the pleasure of showing your moderation in prosperity; you are proud of your inward worth, not of your station. Your idol is yourself, and you have not yet crucified it. This is the sacrifice which God expects from you. . . . People say that you are harsh and severe; that you have no tolerance for failings and errors; that you are unrelenting to yourself and to others; that you are easily won and as easily estranged. They also say that you take no interest in public affairs. . . . What seems to me to be the truth is that you are more capable of understanding them than you think, and that you are right not to interfere in matters of State. But you ought to follow them to a certain extent, and not to lose opportunities of doing good." He went on giving excellent advice and showing tender solicitude for her spiritual needs. However, it was obvious that he by no means thought exclusively of her and that the real object of his preoccupation was the King. He describes him "as a man who has no notion of duty, who requires to be governed—whom she ought to govern." He insists on the necessity of augmenting the credit of Chevreuse and Beauvillier, of surrounding him with honest advisers, thereby to counterbalance the influence of the violent and unjust men who are in power, and to inspire him with the love of peace and the hatred of arbitrary authority. He entered into details which gave the outlines of a programme of government.[1]

Madame de Maintenon felt uneasy. She knew how futile would be the attempt to work so radical a change, and yet she was fully aware that all her efforts to raise the King's religion to a higher level had been unavailing. He himself complained bitterly about the way in which his education had been neglected.

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 259–296.

He had been obliged to train himself for the duties of sovereignty, but his notions about religion never improved. His own was limited to outward practice and devotional exercises. The true foundations of Christian life were ignored by this son of a Spanish mother. "Religion is unknown at Court," is Madame de Maintenon's incessant complaint; "people adapt it to themselves, instead of submitting to its law; mere formalities are insisted upon and no spiritual meaning is attached to them. The King never misses a church function or a fast, but he will not understand that penance and humility are essentials. As long as I live I will tell him the truth about these things."[1] She tried to make him read St. Augustine and St. François de Sales. He never even looked at their writings, and excused himself by remarking that he had no perseverance—that he was not *un homme de suite*. La Chaize, his confessor, looked on, left him alone, and relied on Madame de Maintenon's influence. But Madame de Maintenon freely expressed her opinion that no good could ever be expected in this direction as long as La Chaize remained in office. She spoke of him as of "a man much more gifted for evil than for good, partly because his intentions were not honest, but chiefly because he had no insight."[2] She was deeply shocked to hear him repeat that pious people were of no use to the State; such an indiscriminate condemnation seemed scandalous to her, and she objected for her own part to the theology of La Chaize, which taught the fear of hell instead of preaching the love of God. Much as she disliked the Jesuits in general, and this one in particular, she never tried to urge Fénelon on the King. The only audience he ever granted him and of which the date is uncertain, left an unfavourable impression on Louis XIV. He

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 308, 314.
[2] Ibid., pp. 179, 180.

remarked that he had met "the finest intellect and the most chimerical mind of his realm," and conceived a personal dislike for him. He did not see him again in private, and Fénelon's silent opposition to the King's policy increased.

For in the meantime the conflict with Rome had become acute in France. Thirty-nine bishoprics were vacant; the Pope showed no signs of relenting and extreme Gallicans spoke of a schism and of a French patriarchate. Louis XIV. himself never contemplated a rupture. He was a devout Catholic in his way, and in his estimation the quarrel with Innocent XI. had nothing to do with creed and dogma; it was limited to the border-land where conflicting pretentions clash. Therefore he gladly seized the opportunity which presented itself in 1687 of once more affirming his orthodoxy. He interfered on behalf of the Jesuits, who were eager for a theological success after their recent defeat on the subject of casuistry. They had a mystic doctrine of their own and induced the King to bring about the condemnation of a Spanish mystic, Michel Molinos.

Molinos was a secular priest, who had become exceedingly popular in certain Roman circles, and was known to Innocent XI. personally. He professed to be carrying on the tradition of the Spanish mystics, but he exaggerated it till it became a sort of Christian Nirvana. He taught how the soul rises above symbols, attributes and dogmas to a state of complete passivity in the contemplation of the Divine Essence, the doctrine of so-called "Quietism." He exacted an absolute surrender of the will in obedience to the director of conscience. Molinos was accused by his enemies, not only of undermining moral responsibility, but of tolerating, in theory and in practice, all kinds of aberrations, provided that the soul knew nothing of them, and remained wrapped up in God. Innocent XI.

obviously did not consider the Spaniard's teaching to be quite as dangerous as his enemies averred.[1] The Inquisition, however, condemned him to lifelong imprisonment. The Romans wanted to have him burnt, but Urban VIII. had extinguished the flames of the stake, and Molinos was left to die in prison in 1696.

There was no special reason why Louis XIV. should take any further interest for or against Quietism, except that a similar doctrine had spread to Savoy and the south of France. A Barnabite monk, Lacombe, and his penitent, Jeanne-Marie de la Mothe-Guyon, were its apostles. Madame Guyon, born in 1648, had had a most unhappy youth. Her family married her at fifteen to an elderly and odious husband, who left her a widow at twenty-eight years of age. She had children, whom she entirely neglected; she was well off and sought refuge in mystic devotion.[2] She soon persuaded herself that she was inspired and Lacombe encouraged her to listen to the divine call. They preached the annihilation of self in sinless ecstasy; they had visions, exorcised spirits and worked miracles.

Lacombe soon got into trouble; he was accused of moral misdemeanour, and tried to compromise Madame Guyon. He then passed from one prison to another, and finally died insane in 1715 at the hospital of Charenton. Madame Guyon had gone to Paris, where her state of exaltation was such that she had to be shut up in a convent. The Duchesse de Béthune, whose son had married Madame Guyon's daughter, Madame de Maintenon, and other charitable ladies obtained her release.[3] She became the centre

[1] Choisy, *Mémoires*, p. 249; Dangeau, *Journal*, vi. pp. 89–90; Guerrier, *Madame Guyon, sa vie, sa doctrine*, pp. 126–143; Döllinger u. Reusch, *Geschichte der Moralstreitigkeiten*, &c., i. pp. 73, 130–133, 136, 140.

[2] F. Delacroix, *Études d'Histoire et de Psychologie du Mysticisme*, pp. 118–163; M. Guerrier, *Madame Guyon*.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 123.

of a devout society of mystics, made the acquaintance of Fénelon, and was introduced by him to the Beauvillier family.

Fénelon always sympathised with mysticism as such even before he built up a mystic doctrine of his own.[1] While the Jansenists professed the theory of the irradicable evil in human nature, Fénelon looked on its brighter aspect and taught salvation through the pure love of God. He always maintained that he had never felt the slightest personal sympathy for Madame Guyon, nor did he read all her writings. In his opinion she was a persecuted, saintly woman, who was ignorant in theological matters, but truly enlightened about things spiritual. "Leur sublime s'amalgama," says Saint-Simon.[2] He corresponded on these topics with Madame Guyon, and their letters show that it was she who guided and instructed. She told Fénelon that their souls were knit together like the souls of David and Jonathan. Her autobiography, in which she places herself above the blessèd Virgin and identifies herself with the woman of the Apocalypse, shows distinct signs of religious mania. Yet her mystic writings contain admirable thoughts and real grandeur. She must have been most impressive when talking on these subjects. Her meek resignation, her sufferings, her ardent piety, conquered the affection and admiration of those who knew her. Strange to say, Madame de Maintenon was of the number. She who had resisted Pascal's fiery eloquence and solemn appeal to self-sacrifice in the service of God now drifted into the vagaries of an

[1] Fénelon, *Œuvres*, ix. pp. 78–81, &c. &c.; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 67, Fénelon à Madame de Maintenon, 7 Mars 1697; Masson, *Fénelon et Madame Guyon;* M. Delacroix, *Études d'Histoire et de Psychologie du Mysticisme*, pp. 118–263, Madame Guyon.

[2] Fénelon, *Œuvres*, ix. pp. 78–81, &c. &c.; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 67; Masson, *Fénelon et Madame Guyon;* Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 340–346, 413.

over-heated imagination. There were points of contact between her and Madame Guyon; she, too, despised the world which had given her so much. The thought of death was ever present in her mind; friendship was the one strong link which bound her to life, and friends who sought refuge in God were welcome to her soul. In later days she confessed how imprudently she had acted in giving Madame Guyon access to Saint-Cyr. She so thoroughly believed in her at that time that Louis XIV. had to listen to one of Madame Guyon's mystic writings, although the only impression they very naturally produced on his mind was that "they were idle dreams."[1] At Saint-Cyr Madame Guyon won an enthusiastic adept in the person of her cousin, Mademoiselle de Maisonfort. Madame de Maintenon had taken a fancy to this very remarkable, gifted, and attractive young lady; her desire to secure her and her talents for the community blinded her to the fact that the girl had not the slightest intention of becoming a nun. Both Madame de Maintenon and Fénelon set to work to persuade her to do so,[2] and when she tried to resist, her ill-advised friend wrote to her: "Don't you see how miserable I am, in a state which surpasses imagination, and how I bear it by God's help only? I was young and pretty; I enjoyed life and was liked by everybody. At a more mature age I spent years in the society of the cleverest people. Then came the great change in my fortunes. And yet I can assure you, dearest daughter, that all this leaves a terrible void, a restlessness, an exhaustion, an intense longing for something else, because nothing will ever satisfy us. The only possible peace is with God."[3]

[1] P. Janet, *Fénelon*, p. 67.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. Introduction, pp. xxxi., xxxix., xliii., pp. 167, 202, 218, 224, 244, 285; *Mémoires des dames de Saint-Cyr*, p. 308; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 122, 124.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*, p. 161.

So Mademoiselle de Maisonfort remained at Saint-Cyr, took the veil, and sought refuge for her distracted soul in mysticism with Madame Guyon. The two ladies succeeded so thoroughly in working confusion that the lay sisters themselves began to make dissertations about pure love and to neglect their business while waiting for a special call.[1] Fénelon, when he became aware of this state of things, grew very indignant. He had not intended sanctioning such extravagances, and his mystic doctrines were meant for the chosen few only. However, Mademoiselle de Maisonfort would not listen to him, and went on proselytising and distributing right and left the writings of Madame Guyon.

In the meantime, Abbé Gobelin having died in 1691, Madame de Maintenon chose for her director, not Fénelon, but another priest of Saint-Sulpice, Godet des Marais, whom the King nominated Bishop of Chartres, the diocese to which Saint-Cyr belonged. The choice was excellent. Godet was a learned theologian, whose austere simplicity and neglected outward appearance did not exclude a great knowledge of the world. His whole conduct showed marked firmness and prudence.[2] He had consented to Madame Guyon's being admitted to Saint-Cyr, but he kept himself closely informed about everything which was going on there; when he knew enough to justify his action, he strongly advised Madame de Maintenon to get rid of her. In May 1693 she was banished from Saint-Cyr. Fénelon, who had been consulted, advised her to submit herself and her writings to Bossuet, and gave up seeing her himself. Mademoiselle de Maisonfort and her coterie rebelled

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, pp. 167, 218, 224, 244, 285.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 112 ff., 188; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. p. 303; Döllinger, *Aufsätze*, i. p. 326, *Die einflussreichste Frau in der französischen Geschichte*.

against their bishop, and it took a long time to reduce them to submission.

Bossuet ordered Madame Guyon to keep quiet and examined her books; he found one proposition in them heretical, others simply "intolerable." At first she raised objections, then she promised to obey and retired to the country. After a few months, in June 1694, she appealed to Madame de Maintenon and asked to be brought before a mixed commission of laymen and ecclesiastics for the vindication of her honour against vile calumnies. Madame de Maintenon had grown very nervous; she consulted Bossuet, Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, Bourdaloue, and several of her friends at Saint-Sulpice about Madame Guyon's doctrines. Their opinion was unfavourable to them, but they consented to her request and let her choose her judges, who assembled at Issy, near Paris. Bossuet, assisted by Noailles, presided at their conferences. Fénelon promised to accept their decisions unconditionally and to submit like a little child to Bossuet, "who spoke to him not with the authority of a man, but as the oracle of God." At the same time he began to write "prodigiously." Madame Guyon was nothing to him, he affirmed, but her teaching had been misunderstood, and the doctrine of the saints about the inner life must not be sacrificed. Madame de Maintenon still agreed with him: "He is not the advocate of Madame Guyon," she wrote; "he is her friend and the champion of Christian piety and perfection. I trust his word because I have known few men as sincere as he."

The King was not informed of what was going on. "We kept this affair secret," she says, "as long as we could hope to remedy it."[1] The way out of these intricacies was to save Fénelon from the

[1] P. Janet, *Fénelon*, p. 71; Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 248.

consequences of his connection with Madame Guyon. In December 1694 the King gave him the rich abbey of St. Valéry; on February 4, 1695, he nominated him to the archbishopric of Cambrai, to which was attached the dignity of a prince of the Empire. He had acted, on both occasions, on Madame de Maintenon's advice. But although he made it a condition that Fénelon should spend three months of every year with his royal pupil, Fénelon's little flock felt grievously disappointed. The election to a distant see looked suspiciously like exile, and their real ambition for him was the diocese of Paris.[1]

In March the Commission of Issy condemned certain Quietist errors, but Quietism itself was not censured. It was a compromise, adopted with the intention of sparing Fénelon's feelings, and it led to endless controversies, as compromises are wont to do. Fénelon, who had been consulted beforehand, was invited to sign the articles of Issy. He did so, but most reluctantly, "with his blood." In July he was consecrated at Saint-Cyr by Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and by Noailles, Bishop of Châlons. In September he took possession of his diocese.

Madame Guyon declared that she was no theologian, that her errors and exaggerations had been involuntary, and that she had not intended to go further than St. François de Sales or Madame de Chantal. She also consented to follow Bossuet's advice and to retire to a convent at Meaux. Peace seemed restored, and Madame de Maintenon breathed more freely. A few months later everything was changed, and she became involved in the religious conflict between Bossuet and Fénelon.

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 346, note 1; Abbé Le Dieu, *Mémoires sur Bossuet*, ii. p. 317; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 248.

CHAPTER IX

MADAME DE MAINTENON AND QUIETISM—A RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

In her solitude at Meaux Madame Guyon's feelings underwent another violent reaction. Friends had forsaken her; she had been accused and condemned on false pretences and the chief author of the wrongs inflicted upon her was Bossuet. In July 1695 she could bear it no longer. She escaped from her convent, reappeared at Paris, overwhelmed Bossuet with reproaches and taunted him with the assertion that he had been unable to impugn her orthodoxy. He had shown great forbearance in his dealings with her and with Mademoiselle de Maisonfort; he had argued with them, and done his best to recall them from what he considered their errors. Now, however, his patience was exhausted. He held quarrelsome women in detestation; all would be lost, he said, if he were to give way, and nothing would induce him to do so. Madame Guyon was handed over to the police and imprisoned by order of the King—to Madame de Maintenon's intense satisfaction.

Fénelon's course seemed clear.[1] He had promised officially to approve a treatise prepared by Bossuet with the twofold object of confounding the Quietists and of explaining the true doctrine of the Interior Life. The first shadow fell upon their relations when Fénelon offered to collaborate in the book and Bossuet declined his assistance.

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 58.

Madame de Maintenon still believed in Fénelon, and her ardent efforts made for peace. An unexpected event seemed likely to help her out of her difficulties. Harlay de Champvallon, Archbishop of Paris, was hostile to her and to Fénelon. He was a clever, amiable man of the world, with a great capacity for government and no morals;[1] he died suddenly in August 1695, and a witty lady remarked that only two trifles would make his funeral oration a difficult task —his life and his death.[2] Madame de Maintenon decided the choice of his successor. Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, was an exemplary priest, who enjoyed her confidence. He was the younger brother of the Marshal Duc de Noailles who had been in command since 1688 of the army in Catalonia, but who had just retired from the service on account of bad health.[3]

The whole family, one of the most illustrious in France, was held in high esteem by Louis XIV., who immediately sympathised with the idea of nominating Noailles to Paris.[4] When the bishop, who had scruples about exchanging one diocese for another, refused to accept, Madame de Maintenon wrote to him: "In order to serve the King, it is sometimes necessary to deceive him. May God help us to do so again in view of such an end."[5] She had evidently not told the King that Noailles, who shared Bossuet's views, was hostile to the Jesuits and friendly to Fénelon, whose connection with Madame Guyon was also hidden from him.

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. p. 108; ii. pp. 348, 361; xii. p. 141; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 250–251, 274, 276.

[2] Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, Madame de Coulanges à Madame de Sévigné, Août 1695.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 218, note 2, 286, note 1, 289, note 1, 291; Noailles, *Mémoires*, i. p. 322, &c.; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 394.

[4] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 358–361; v. pp. 123, 126–129; vi. p. 121; x. pp. 394–395; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Mémoires*, &c., ii. p. 108.

[5] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 14; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 377.

Innocent XII. having ordered Noailles to accept, he became Archbishop of Paris. From that moment his relations to Madame de Maintenon were not unlike those of a son with a tender mother. She asked him to keep their intercourse as secret as possible; she informed him about everything which was going on at Court; she told him what the King thought about preferments and other religious matters and how they should be managed. She urged him not to spare the Jesuits whenever he found them to be in the wrong, and in such cases to make the King speak to them himself. She went so far as to say on one such occasion "that she did not think Louis untruthful—*menteur*"—and on another "that he had promised to submit to Noailles, and how she told him it was the will of God that he should do so." She implored Noailles "to be free and bold with him."[1] She was convinced that this saintly prelate was the very man, enlightened, mild and firm, whom the King wanted.

In March 1696 she received a letter from Fénelon which foretold trouble. He was convinced, he said, that Madame Guyon, whom he knew better than anybody else did, had never intended to teach another doctrine than that of the Gospel and of the Church, and he made himself answerable for obtaining a full explanation as well as a submission from her on this condition. If she had erred, it was through ignorance and exaggeration: "Let her die in prison; I am perfectly willing that she should perish and never be heard of again. It seems to me that you think me neither a traitor, nor a liar, nor a hypocrite, nor a rebel against the Church. Why, then, do you set your heart against us as if we belonged to a religion different from your own? Why are you afraid of speaking about God with me, as if I were likely to

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 34–37, 44, 53, 55, 64, 143–144.

seduce your conscience? I bid farewell to you in the hope that He may yet join our hearts together and with the inconsolable grief of being your cross." He promised never to offend Bossuet, to act in accordance with him, to let him triumph over him, provided "the doctrine was saved."

Madame de Maintenon felt convinced that Fénelon "would suffer martyrdom rather than admit that Madame Guyon was wrong."[1] In July he received the manuscript of Bossuet's treatise[2] and she heard from him again after he returned it. He explained that he could not approve a book which attributed to Madame Guyon absurd and monstrous errors; such a concession would be misunderstood as a condemnation of her intentions and of his own teaching, which he intended to put before the public at a favourable opportunity.[3] Madame de Maintenon came to the conclusion that it was advisable to secure Fénelon's removal from Versailles. She told Noailles that the King had full confidence in him and had always approved of his view that it was the duty of a bishop to reside in his diocese. "You have never agreed that Monsieur de Cambrai should be preceptor and Archbishop at the same time. The King is naturally precise and severe; these maxims are congenial to him. He knows that you are firm, while people accuse you of being too mild."[4] Noailles did not take the hint, and kept on good terms with Fénelon. Madame de Maintenon's intimacy with the Beauvilliers had not survived their differences of opinion. She lamented their stubbornness in defending their friends. "The coldness between the ladies and myself

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 67; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 259.

[2] Bossuet, *Instruction sur les États d'Oraison*, &c.

[3] Beausset, *Vie de Fénelon*, ii. "Pièces justificatives," 2 Août 1696.

[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 108–109, 14 Août 1696.

increases daily," she wrote to Noailles; "our intercourse is mere dissimulation."[1] On her part it ended in a strong dislike of them.

Fénelon was alternately at Versailles, at Paris and at Cambrai, and in October 1696, Noailles received from him the reply he had prepared against Bossuet.[2] He returned it with courteous words and begged of him not to publish anything before Bossuet's *Instruction* should have appeared. Fénelon promised but made no secret of his desire to get a hearing as soon as possible.[3] He returned to Cambrai, and left his manuscript in the hands of Chevreuse. His impetuous friend had it printed in such haste that on February 1, 1697, Beauvillier was able to present the King with the first copy of the *Maximes des Saints*.[4] Its author condemned the doctrine of Molinos, but presented his own as the unbroken tradition of the Church. La Chaize and Bossuet now approached the King. His confessor told him that the book contained forty-three grievous errors; Bossuet informed him that the publication of the book was nothing less than a scandal. In private he called Fénelon "un parfait hypocrite."[5] Louis XIV. had always distrusted him; now he complained, and not without reason, that he had been deceived to the extent of promoting a heretic to an archbishopric. In the first moment of violent anger he resolved to dismiss Beauvillier and to replace him by Noailles' brother. The Archbishop nobly refused and interceded for Beauvillier, who offered no resistance.

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 74, 87, 117–118; v. pp. 265, 268.

[2] Fénelon, *Exposition des Maximes des Saints sur la Vie interieure.*

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 118; P. Janet, *Fénelon*, p. 86, note 1.

[4] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 67–68; xiv. p. 257.

[5] Bossuet, *Œuvres*, xv. p. 265; xxix. p. 117; Abbé Le Dieu, *Journal*, ii. p. 228; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 144–146; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, pp. 387–388; Daguesseau, *Œuvres*, xiii. p. 74.

He was ready, even glad, to obey the King, and to devote himself entirely to the service of God. At the same time, he gave up Madame Guyon, but bravely took Fénelon's part. He made himself answerable for the purity of his faith and the absolute sincerity of his intentions. The Duc de Bourgogne was in despair; he threw himself at his grandfather's feet, protested with tears that Fénelon had taught him the Catholic faith, and that alone, and that he owed everything to him.[1] Yet Louis XIV. did not relent. In August 1697 he exiled Fénelon to Cambrai, asked the authorities at Rome to censure his book, but did not part with Beauvillier. Madame de Maintenon wrote to Noailles in her distress: "This opposition is not of my doing; the King's heart is set against all innovations, but I shall be made responsible."[2]

Her fears were not unfounded. Louis XIV. told her how bitterly he resented her partiality for Fénelon, how strongly he objected to her dislike of the Jesuits, of which even Bourdaloue complained,[3] and he warned her not to interfere any more in religious matters. Two Popes, Alexander VIII. and Innocent XII., had requested her good offices and she was obliged to send word to the Nuncio through Noailles not to call upon her again, as the King would not have it. Her slavery, she said, was such that silent resignation, and no power whatever to do good, was all that was left her.[4] The behaviour of La Chaize increased her troubles. He suddenly changed his tactics; after having denounced Fénelon's errors to the King, this adversary of "Pure Love" undertook the defence of its apostle at Rome; he assured Madame de Maintenon

[1] Abbé Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin*, i. pp. 66, 72.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 263; iv. pp. 144–146.

[3] Ibid., iv. pp. 94, 237, 310, 321, 335.

[4] Ibid., iii. pp. 221, 225–226, 341–344; iv. pp. 95–96, 256; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, v. pp. 123, 126–129; vi. p. 120; ix. p. 200; x. p. 394.

that the whole controversy was harmless and ought to be extinguished, and that she should influence the King in that sense.[1] She refused to do so, knew herself to be surrounded by spies and thought her disgrace imminent. The trials she underwent made her seriously ill: "Are we going to lose you because of all this?" the King tenderly said to her while she was lying in bed prostrate and in tears. He had forgiven her long ago, and she was as dear to him as ever.[2]

She had given up, not only Fénelon, but all those who were connected with him, and her attitude became decidedly hostile. To Noailles she complained of having been used as a stepping-stone "by people whom she trusted, and who had deceived her." She intrigued against Beauvillier's continuation in office.[3] It was due to his nobleness of heart and to the forgiving charity of his family, that an open breach was avoided: "I doubt not," she wrote to Noailles, "that the Duc de Beauvillier is sorry to lose me. My friendship for him was very sincere, and I really believe that he had the same feelings for me." She never found such friends again. Fénelon's staff of tutors was still with his royal pupils but they were dismissed by her advice. Mademoiselle de Maisonfort and the two associates who shared her views were exiled from Saint-Cyr, where the King went himself and admonished the nuns. Poor Maisonfort, now entirely abandoned by Madame de Maintenon, wandered from one convent to another, and died in oblivion and probably in want, after having been deprived by Bossuet's death of her last protector.[4]

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 92, 151, 153, 170–171, 177; P. Lauras, *Bourdaloue*, &c., ii. pp. 220–223; Fénelon, *Correspondance*, xi. p. 65.

[2] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 388; Th. Lavallée, iv. p. 236, notes; "Les Dames de Saint-Cyr," p. 287: "Le Roi me garde à vue; je ne vois plus qui que ce soit."

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 162–163, 237.

[4] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 388; Th. Lavallée, *Histoire de la maison royale de Saint-Cyr*, pp. 171–174; *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 237, 245.

Madame Guyon expected no mercy and found none. Noailles, it is true, took pity on her, and obtained in 1703 her release from Vincennes after several years' imprisonment. After that she was heard of no more and dropped out of history. Madame de Maintenon went so far as to endorse La Combe's calumnies against the unhappy woman, and to speak "of her follies as a source of amusement to the public."[1] Fénelon had taken leave of the King before his final departure from Versailles.[2] She refused him an audience: "God alone," she said, "can alter his mind; for he sincerely believes his cause to be the cause of religion and of truth itself; therefore interested motives have no hold upon him, and he won't come back."[3] "His connection with Madame Guyon rests on conformity of doctrine. The danger is obvious as this doctrine is supported by a man of such virtue, such mental gifts and in such an exalted position. We were silent as long as we hoped to remedy it; we revealed it when we thought it our duty towards the Church to do so. The affairs of Monsieur de Cambrai are an affliction to me, but they do not disturb me any more. I wait in peace for the decision of the Holy See."[4] Meanwhile, the *Maximes des Saints* disappointed everybody. Their subtleties passed the understanding of theologians; to common people they were absolutely unintelligible. A passionate interest, however, was aroused by the controversy which the book excited.

Bossuet now declared religion itself at stake and spoke in the commanding tone of a doctor of the Church. In his estimation the contest was not limited to mystic abstracts. The exponent of Gallicanism

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 117, 253.
[2] Ibid., p. 173; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iv. p. 105, note 8.
[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 169-170.
[4] Ibid., p. 266.

rose in full armour against the Ultramontane, who held the Gallican liberties to be mere servitude to the King.[1] He had pledged himself for the unimpaired unity of the faith against the variations of Protestantism, and he would not yield to "a cabal" of sectarians, whose real aim was to govern the State and to encircle the Crown.[2]

The champion of authority stood up for the powers which held heresy at bay, while the theologian turned in wrath against the defender of individualism, who pleaded for absolute disinterestedness in the all-absorbing love of God. A creed which sacrificed paradise itself approached within measurable distance a worship which might do without a church. The antagonism between Meaux and Cambrai was as old as Christianity itself, as irreconcilable as metaphysics and reality. In the brunt of battle the majestic Bossuet lowered his customary standard; he hurled invective and the far more deadly weapons of malicious insinuation against the adversary who had once been his friend. Fénelon was driven to the defensive, and his powers rose with his peril. He had been taunted with brutal particulars about Madame Guyon's former career;[3] he proudly asked for complete investigation and declared with calm dignity that he had nothing to fear. His language lent nobility to the acrimonious debate kindled by the *furor theologicus*, and the deep alarm of his soul expressed itself in prophetic accents. "You and I," so he spoke to Bossuet, "we are objects of derision to unbelievers, and of sorrow to good men. That mankind should be what it is ought not to cause surprise, but that ministers of Jesus Christ, that the angels of the Church should enact

[1] Fénelon, *Œuvres*, vii. p. 315.
[2] Ranke, *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans; Franz. Geschichte*, v. pp. 365, 368, April, August 1698.
[3] Bossuet, *Relation sur le Quiétisme*.

such scenes before an incredulous, profane world, is a cause for bloody tears. We might, indeed, call ourselves blessed, if, instead of this warfare in writing, we had read the Catechism in our dioceses and taught poor peasants to fear and love God."[1]

From the beginning, as early as April 1697, Fénelon had absolutely declined to submit to any other tribunal than that of the Pope. The King had retorted by denouncing his book at Rome as a "very bad and a very dangerous one, which had already been censured by several bishops and a great number of theologians." He refused Fénelon the permission he asked to defend himself personally before the Pope, but he agreed that both prelates should choose representatives who were entitled to act in their name. Bossuet sent his nephew, Abbé Bossuet, a violent and unscrupulous man. Fénelon entrusted his cause to a devoted friend, Abbé de Chanterac, whose very adversaries knew him to be a wise, pacific, and learned priest. The King's ambassador, Cardinal de Bouillon, had the strictest orders to bring about Fénelon's condemnation as quickly as possible. In January 1699 he was dismissed from his nominal preceptorship, so as to leave no doubt about his complete disgrace.

Innocent XI.'s successor, Alexander VIII., having died after a short pontificate, Innocent XII. had been elected in 1691 by the support of France.[2] He was a weak and sickly old man, who knew little about theology, but who revealed his sympathies by the pert remark, "that Fénelon had erred through excessive love of God, while Bossuet had erred through want of love for men."

The beginning of his reign was marked by a total change in the ecclesiastical policy of Louis XIV.

[1] P. Janet, *Fénelon*, p. 91, note 2.
[2] Coulanges, *Mémoires*, p. 68 ff.

Alexander VIII. had solemnly condemned the Declaration of 1682, though neither he nor his successor relaxed their efforts to come to a peaceful understanding with France. The King desired it too. The childless monarch of Spain, the last of the Habsburg dynasty, was doomed to an early death, and the great problem of the age, that of the Spanish Succession, kept all the statecraft of Europe on the watch at Madrid. Louis XIV. courted the support of Rome in view of coming events. The stumbling-block was the Declaration of 1682. Daguesseau, the future Chancellor, attributes the King's resolve to give it up to the pressure daily exercised upon him by Madame de Maintenon.[1] In 1693 the Declaration was deprived of its legal character. The doctrine upheld by it was only to be taught in future as a theological opinion.

In return for this surrender, Rome gave the canonical institution to the King's nominees, but not before they had solemnly apologised for their adherence to the four articles of 1682. As long as the King's powerful hand held the reins of government in Church and State, the consequences of his action were hardly felt; Gallicanism prevailed among the French clergy and controversy was not silenced. Yet the Pope's power had asserted itself beyond a shadow of doubt upon the main issue and it came to be seen that the Gallican system had received its deathblow. Constitutional government in the Church was extinct in its stronghold; complete centralisation under the Pope's absolute power was merely a question of time. On all minor points concessions might be granted and Louis XIV. exacted the condemnation of Fénelon.

Yet before consenting to sacrifice the staunchest defender of papal authority in favour of the author of the Declaration of 1682, Rome hesitated for two years.

[1] Daguesseau. Döllinger, *Die einflussreichste Frau*, Aufsätze, i. p. 405.

Western Christendom took part in the contest. The Anglican Bishop Burnet and the German Pietists sided with Fénelon.[1] Jurieu, Bossuet's Calvinist antagonist, waged war against Quietism. The imperial ambassador to the Holy See stood up for it; the Gallicans and Spain defended Bossuet's cause. The Jesuits found it opportune to forego their short adherence to Gallicanism, which had lost its point, they followed in the rear of La Chaize; the casuists, whom Pascal had killed, revived as mystics in defence of the anti-Jansenist Fénelon. There were exceptions; Bourdaloue, who had never consented to compromise in morals, did not approve of Quietism.[2] The most extraordinary episode was furnished by Cardinal de Bouillon, the French Ambassador at Rome, who passed over to the enemy's camp. He secretly did everything in his power to prevent Fénelon's condemnation, which it was the object of his mission to bring about. His enemies revealed his treachery to the King, whereupon he was recalled and fell into disgrace. The Romans were alternately told stories about Fénelon being in love with Madame Guyon, and about Bossuet and Noailles being determined to make public Madame de Maintenon's secret marriage with the King, while Fénelon stood out for the honour of the Crown, and had to suffer for it. He also consented to make use of an argument that proved less powerful at Rome than at Paris, and accused both Bossuet and Noailles of Jansenism.[3] His fate was ultimately sealed by the Jansenist Cardinal Casanata,[3] who, with his colleague

[1] Scharling, *Molinos*, Einleitung.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Ecrits inédits*, ii. pp. 466–468; *Les Confesseurs du Roi*; *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 82–89, notes; v. pp. 111–112, 115, 147 ff.; P. Lauras, *Bourdaloue*, &c., ii. pp. 220–223; Fénelon, *Correspondance*, xi. p. 60; iv. p. 1; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 145, 151–153.

[3] Viscount St. Cyres, *François de Fénelon*, pp. 164–165, 167, 173; Döllinger, *Die einflussreichste Frau*, &c., Aufsätze, i. p. 379.

Albani, drew up the judgment which condemned twenty-three propositions out of the *Maximes des Saints*, but not the doctrine of pure love.

Bossuet, whose church policy had met with a crushing defeat, rejoiced in the triumph of his theology. Quietism was heard of no more. Fénelon, however, was leniently treated. Notwithstanding all the King's efforts to obtain a judgment on account of heresy, the Pope absolutely refused to qualify his doctrine as "in any way heretical."[1]

Fénelon had solemnly promised to submit to Rome unconditionally, and he kept his word. He himself informed his flock of the papal decision; he accepted it "simply, humbly, without restriction," and with such fervent devotion that his adversaries found his obedience ostentatious and wanted to hear of a solemn retractation. It had not been demanded, and was never made. After Bossuet's death, in 1704, Fénelon wrote to the Jesuit Le Tellier: "The unworthy doctrine which degrades charity by reducing it to the sole motive of hope has been tolerated and allowed to triumph. He who erred prevailed; he who was free from error was crushed." But he added: "My book I count for nothing, I have sacrificed it with joy and docility."[2] He never believed that pure love had been condemned because his way of defending it had failed.

The King, however, thought so. He had got what he wanted—external conformity—and Fénelon he never saw again.

Madame de Maintenon had shown more insight. She greatly feared at one time that the King was asking too much, and that incessant attacks on pure love might prevent Quietism being condemned. When he

[1] Lettre de l'Abbé Bossuet, 17 mars, 1699; P. Janet, *Fénelon*, Lettre de Louis XIV., p. 98; Hügel, Baron v., *St. Catherine of Genoa*, &c., ii. p. 256 ff.

[2] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, iii. p. 246; Beausset, *Vie de Fénelon*, ii. pp. 291, 383, 387.

handed her the document which contained this condemnation she felt relieved.[1] In 1695 she had tried to shield Fénelon against himself by making him Archbishop of Cambrai. In 1699 she obtained the cardinal's hat for Noailles, in order to protect him against the attacks of the Jesuits. Their insinuation that he favoured the Jansenists led in 1698 to the formal accusation that he was himself tainted with this heresy.[2]

Thus another storm was rising, in comparison with which even the breach with Fénelon sank into insignificance.

With him, however, Madame de Maintenon had another contention. In December 1695 she wrote to Noailles: "Here is a letter which was written to the King two or three years ago. You must return it to me. It is well done. But such truths won't bring him back; they irritate and discourage him." A few days later: "I am glad you think the letter I entrusted to you too harsh; I always thought so; don't you know the style?"[3] She could not possibly mistake it: Fénelon had often written to her in the same strain. The autograph manuscript of the letter exists,[4] but there is no trustworthy evidence that the King ever received or read it. It was first published by D'Alembert in 1787, and contains the words: "Your council is without energy and power to do good. Madame de Maintenon and the Duc de Beauvillier might make use of your confidence in them to open your eyes. But their weakness and timidity are a dishonour to themselves and a scandal to the world.

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 275, 278.

[2] *Problème ecclesiastique*, &c., 1698 (anonyme); Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. pp. 10, 334; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 161; Mai 1697, pp. 261, 262, 16 Oct. 1698.

[3] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, ed. 1827, ii. pp. 329, 332; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 45, 54; A. de Boislisle, *Receuil de la Société de l'Hist. de France, procès-verbal*, jvier. 1886.

[4] Fénelon, *Œuvres: Correspondance*, ii. p. 329, ed. 1827, contains a facsimile of the original in the editor's possession.

France is ruined; why do they delay speaking frankly to you? What are they good for, if they don't tell you that you must give back the territories which do not belong to you, and prefer the lives of your subjects to vainglory. . . ." The ruthless offensiveness of this language has suggested explanations. Was Fénelon's attack on his friends merely a blind used for the purpose of concealing more thoroughly the identity of the anonymous author? Or were these words suppressed in the text of the letter to which Madame de Maintenon so distinctly alludes? And was it really his intention to say to the King: "You don't love God; you fear Him with the cowardice of a slave. Hell frightens you. Your religion is a mere superstition. You look upon yourself as an earthly god, while God has sent you into this world to promote the welfare of your people. Your whole life has been spent outside the path of truth and justice, and therefore outside the gospel." Out of Fénelon's terrible indictment against despotic power, cruel, unjust, and ruinous wars, monstrous expenditure, pillaged countries, broken treaties, criminal and treacherous ministers, a corrupt and scandalous archbishop, a foolish, ignorant, and domineering confessor, one famous passage has remained unforgotten. It is the description of the state of France in 1692: "Sire, your humiliation and the breakdown of your power are the last chance for liberty and peace among Christian nations. The Allies prefer war to truce with an adversary such as you, who makes lasting peace impossible. . . . Your own people are starving, the population is daily shrinking away, commerce is bankrupt, the fields are untilled, France is a gigantic hospital, which stands desolate and impoverished." The fate of the "Letter to the King" is shrouded in mystery, but, by a curious accident, Fénelon obtained another hearing in the open light of day.

Télémaque was composed probably in 1694. Fénelon affirms that he never intended handing it over to the public. The pious zeal of Chevreuse had decided on the fate of the *Maximes des Saints;* but a venal copyist, we are told by the Archbishop himself, took the manuscript of *Télémaque* to a printer in Paris. The existence of *Télémaque* became known in the autumn of 1698, at the height of the Quietist controversy, but the sheets were seized by the police. In 1699 the book was published by the piratical booksellers of Holland.[1] In the first year it went through twenty editions; copies of it fetched their weight in gold, and it was translated into all European languages. Its literary merit, great as it is, does not account for such a success.

This poem in prose was a continuation of Fénelon's educational work. The Duc de Bourgogne was going to be married, and the hour had struck to shield the youth against the allurements of temptation, by inspiring him with the pure and noble vision of wedded love. The task was a delicate one; Fénelon borrowed his fiction from antiquity and clad his moral doctrine in the garb of pagan wisdom. The transparent veil of allegory is thrown over dangerous pictures of sensual passion, in which Calypso fails to ensnare Mentor's pupil. Eucharis is but an assumed name for the subtle power of tender, disinterested, and yet forbidden affection which might at any moment touch Télémaque's unsophisticated heart. Antiope rewards his constancy. On peaceful happiness with her in a lawful union dawns the heavenly light of the Elysian fields.

Fortunately for Télémaque-Bourgogne, he had no more ardent desire; he was then already in love with a royal bride, and felt like the hero of "Monsieur de Cambrai's romance," which Bossuet found "not serious

[1] Beausset, *Vie de Fénelon*, iii. p. 12; Fénelon, *Œuvres*, vii. p. 665; xx. p. 1 ff.

enough, and not worthy of a priest."[1] But Fénelon had never intended to write a mere love-story, and Télémaque was destined to reign.

The imaginary city of Salentum foreshadows eighteenth-century France. Enlightened despotism rules. The State is chiefly an agricultural State, in which town populations are to be reduced; luxury is done away with, simplicity of life is to be enforced, commerce is free, native industries must be encouraged, foreign merchants may come and go as they please. Fraud and oppression, even bankruptcy, are punishable crimes. Privileges cease to exist. Usury is forbidden. A cosmopolitan ideal of fraternity dominates the relations with foreign powers. Mankind stands above the interests of the fatherland; all men are brothers; all wars are civil wars and a stain upon the race. There is little difference between the theft of a vineyard and the theft of a province. Defensive wars, however, are to be fought with the utmost energy, and the first duty of the sovereign is the protection of his country against foreign aggression. Future citizens belong to the State rather than to their parents; they must be taught to obey the laws, and be moulded to the law-giver's will. He is the master and, above all, the father of his people. They are unable to work their own regeneration; their ruler's supreme task is to reform them. He is the slave of the public weal, and the victim of duty; he expects no reward and abjures all self-interest. He is not allowed to forget that even the best sovereigns are unprofitable servants. "If kings are to be pitied for having to govern men, so men are to be pitied for having to be ruled by kings."

Soon after the publication of *Télémaque* Madame de Maintenon wrote to Madrid: "People speak of nothing else but this book, in which our princes are

[1] Abbé Le Dieu, *Journal*, ii. p. 12 ff.

taught by Fénelon to prefer a peaceful sovereign to a conqueror. They say that Monsieur de Cambrai is at the head of a cabal."[1]

Contemporary keys to *Télémaque* identified the chief figures of the romance with the King, the Dauphin, Louvois, Madame de Montespan, and William of Orange.[2] It was all true: the model government of Salentum could be but a satire on the government of Louis XIV. "It is a beautiful book; it was lent to me in manuscript," Elisabeth Charlotte exclaimed to her aunt, the Electress Sophia; "I would have copied it for you had I not promised not to do so. May the lessons contained in it impress the Duc de Bourgogne. If he listens to them he will be a great King in his day."[3]

Yet it would be most unfair to judge of Fénelon's politics by the standard of *Télémaque*. Like the *Dialogues of the Dead*, written at an earlier date for the Duc de Bourgogne, this reminiscence of Plato's Republic is the philosophical dream of a humanitarian, and there is no evidence that Fénelon attached practical value to it. Some of its ideas, and also some of its illusions, have passed into his "Plan of Government" of 1710, and into his Letters to Chevreuse, intended for the Dauphin. But the foundation of their programme of reform is a historical one, and the convocation of the States-General is expected from the future King. The Utopia of Salentum thus ripened into statesmanlike proposals.

Louis XIV. never heard of them. He had exhausted the means of punishing Fénelon when *Télémaque* told the world that his system was doomed. A softer voice pleaded for mercy in the name of exhausted, impoverished France.

[1] Madame de Maintenon et la Princesse des Ursins, *Lettres*.

[2] Viscount St. Cyres, *François de Fénelon*, p. 179, note 3.

[3] *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, bei Ranke; *Französische Geschichte*, v. p. 372, 14 juin 1699.

Louis XIV. had known Racine since the days of his youth. When the public utterly failed to understand that another great poet had succeeded Corneille, the King with unerring taste applauded his first tragedies. He was very fond of Racine personally, and gave him lodgings at Versailles and free access to him whenever he wished to come. During one of the monarch's illnesses he slept in his bedroom; he alone could venture to defend his teachers at Port-Royal without incurring the royal displeasure, and to him was entrusted the task of writing down for posterity the history of the reign. Madame de Maintenon, who saw him often, knew that he did not exaggerate when he spoke to her of the people's miserable condition. All her savings went to the poor; she contracted debts to help them, while she was told by the King that he could not give alms any more, because what he gave with one hand was taken by the other from his destitute subjects. She then implored him to reduce his expenses. "I made him angry," she wrote in 1698, "and to my grief I obtained nothing. A new building, which will cost one hundred thousand francs, is in progress; Marly will soon be a new Versailles. We must pray and be patient."[1]

She knew that Racine had written a paper on the condition of the rural populations in France, and she wanted to see it. While she was reading this report, the King came in, took it out of her hands, began to read, and asked in an irritated tone who was the author. She replied that she had promised not to mention his name, upon which the King became so pressing that she had to obey. "Does Racine believe that he knows everything because he writes excellent verse?" he angrily exclaimed, "and does

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 378–379; iv. pp. 105–106, 240.

he expect to be minister because he is a great poet?"[1]

After this outbreak she did not dare to receive Racine any more, but she promised to use her influence in his favour and gave him an appointment in the park of Versailles. They were talking together when carriage-wheels were heard. "Hide yourself—the King is coming," she hurriedly said. He was forgiven in the end, but the King's displeasure had been so great a strain upon his over-sensitive nerves that he did not recover from the shock and died in 1699. His last request, a burial at Port-Royal, was granted to its greatest pupil.

[1] Louis Racine, *Vie de Jean Racine;* T. Lemaître, *Jean Racine, Conférences;* Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 215, Racine à Madame de Maintenon, févr. 1698.

CHAPTER X

THE DUC AND DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE

Louis XIV. considered himself bound as a father to raise his bastards to the highest dignities in the State and justified as a king in so doing. The government of Brittany went to the Comte de Toulouse, High Admiral of France, the government of Languedoc to the Duc du Maine. He was still a mere boy when the command of the Swiss Guards, one of the greatest in the army, became vacant on the death of a prince of the blood royal. A candidate presented himself in the person of Eugene, a member of the house of Savoy, who had been born in France, where he intended to take service. His outward appearance told against him. "He was ugly and dirty, and had greasy hair," is Madame's description of him. The house of Savoy was on bad terms with the King and Eugene was antipathetic to him. The command of the Swiss Guards was given to the Duc du Maine, whereupon Eugene took service in Austria, and kept the vow he had made never to re-enter France but sword in hand and victorious. Yet notwithstanding all his fondness for his illegitimate sons, the King did not want them to marry: "People of that sort ought not to do so," he said one day to Madame de Maintenon.[1]

The Comte de Toulouse, an excellent, honest-minded man, married later in life the widow of Gondrin; but the more handsome, brilliant Duc du

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 73–74.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

DUC DU MAINE
From the painting at Versailles

Maine would not wait and a lady of rank was proposed for him.[1] While these negotiations were carried on, the Duc de Chartres, only son of Monsieur and of Elisabeth Charlotte, was summoned into the King's presence. The short audience led to his betrothal with Mademoiselle de Blois, Madame de Montespan's youngest daughter. This event was by no means a surprise to those nearly concerned in it. Monsieur had consented to the marriage, which was the King's dearest wish, and Chartres had hardly been consulted. He was highly gifted, and had shown remarkable military talent, but his conduct was such that an early marriage seemed the last chance of extricating him from his surroundings. His mother, who bitterly resented the shame of his scandalous life, poured out her grief to his preceptor, Abbé Dubois, whom she entirely trusted. She had the highest opinion of his character, and at the time she did not suspect that he was at the bottom of the intrigue which finally led to the marriage she abhorred. Her good opinion of Dubois was shared by Fénelon, who speaks of him as a friend, and at this early period of his career he seems to have been free from blame. Both Fénelon and Madame de Maintenon joined in his efforts to overcome the young Duke's aversion to the alliance with Mademoiselle de Blois.[2] He had resigned himself to his fate when his mother was summoned by Louis XIV. Her indignation knew no bounds when she realised that she had no alternative but to accept the *fait accompli.* Under the sting of the unpardonable insult to the blood which ran in her veins and to the house of Orléans, she would not be conciliated by the King, turned her back upon him when he courteously took leave of her, and was pacing

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 200–201, 326 ; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. p. 99 ; xiv. p. 262.

[2] Seilhac, *L'Abbé Dubois*, &c., i. pp. 26 ff., 206–243 : Lettres de la duchesse d'Orléans à Dubois, 1691–1696.

the great gallery of Versailles in a hot rage when she met her son. Saint-Simon, then a youth of seventeen, was present, and asserts that she boxed Chartres' ears in presence of the whole Court.[1] He was hardly less wretched than she, while his bride is reported to have said: "I don't care to be loved by him, provided he marries me."[2] These inauspicious nuptials were celebrated in February 1692. The Duke nicknamed his wife "Madame Lucifer"; her mother-in-law called her proud, selfish and bad-tempered, would hardly look at her, and described her ugliness in the plainest terms.[3] Others speak less unfavourably about her. Madame de Maintenon tried to pacify Elisabeth Charlotte: "I wish," she said in a letter the contents of which were intended for her, "that Madame knew exactly how things happened. The result may not suit her taste, but she would have to agree that everybody did their duty. You know that it is my folly to trust to reason, particularly in the case of Madame, who has qualities which ought to make her happier than she is. Is it possible that, having had to consent to this marriage, she should not do so graciously and talk it over with the King in order to come to a good understanding with him?"[4]

But Elisabeth Charlotte lived in terror of a new disaster: the Duc du Maine's marriage had not come off, and she had an only daughter. "The Parisians say," she wrote to the Electress Sophia, "that they tolerated the marriage of the King's bastard daughter with a real prince, because she gets my son's rank, but if the old hag should dare to marry my daughter to Monsieur du Maine, they will strangle him first. They are good people; I love them."[5]

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 68–75.
[2] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 190.
[3] *Correspondance de Madame*, &c., Ed. Brunet, i. p. 303; ii. p. 23.
[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 324.
[5] *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, Ranke, *Franz. Geschichte*, v. p. 337.

The catastrophe was averted by the heir of the great Condé. His son and his nephew were already husbands of the King's illegitimate offspring. He was proud and happy to secure an alliance with another bastard. His three daughters were so tiny that their sister-in-law, Madame la Duchesse, used to call them "the dolls of the blood." In 1692 the tallest of them married the Duc du Maine. Madame de Maintenon was well pleased; she counted upon her intelligence, which was great, and upon her good behaviour, which did not last. "If she disappoints me," she said in 1693, "I must resign myself to the fact that the King wont find a single woman in his family whose conduct is satisfactory. I wish I could love her who belongs to the man dearest to my heart!"[1]

The great war was dragging on. Louis XIV., who had given up commanding his armies, resolved to go once more to Flanders, where Luxembourg held William of Orange at bay. Madame de Maintenon had to follow with the princesses at the end of May 1693. She saw Namur and Dinan again, and describes herself "a prey to headaches, rheumatism, and exhaustion." The King, too, was growing old; notwithstanding his robust constitution, he was afflicted by gout and fever.[2] The enemy stood with an inferior force near Louvain, a decisive battle was expected, when, only one week after his arrival in camp, Louis suddenly announced his intention to leave for Versailles. Madame de Maintenon, when she heard of it, expressed her delight "that the interest of the State compelled him to return."[2] Saint-Simon and others make her responsible for the determination, which, according to them, saved William from a

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 345, 385; Sainte-Beuve, *La duchesse du Maine*, Causeries du Lundi, iii.; Général de Piépape, *La duchesse du Maine*, pp. 15–19.

[2] Fagon, *Journal de la Santé du Roi*, pp. 205–206; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 370–372.

crushing defeat. The army bitterly resented it. Saint-Simon calls the King's departure scandalous; it was due, he says, to Madame de Maintenon's tears and supplications. Another explanation has been offered.

The news that Heidelberg had fallen into the hands of the French had reached the King a few days after his arrival in Flanders. He consulted Chamlay, who advised him to send the Dauphin and Boufflers with a detached force to the Rhine, where a new defeat of the Imperialists might compel the Emperor to make peace.[1] The plan failed. Luxembourg, who had opposed it, remained in command and marched with his diminished but still superior forces against William, and defeated him at Landen. His victory, great as it was, did not terminate the struggle, which went on for another four years. The tide turned after Luxembourg's death in 1695. Louis XIV. replaced the greatest of his generals by an incapable commander, the Duc de Villeroy. Personal motives decided his choice. Villeroy had been his royal master's playmate and had remained a favourite. He was an accomplished gentleman, a pleasant companion, magnificent, self-confident, ignorant, as easily dejected by adversity as he was arrogant when fortune smiled on him. William, who knew the inferiority of this adversary, now risked the hazardous game which could not have been safely played against generals like Catinat or Luxembourg. He resolved to reconquer Namur and left his lieutenant, Vaudemont, with an army in Flanders. Villeroy sent couriers to the King and informed him that he proposed first to annihilate Vaudemont and then to deliver Namur. Twenty-four hours later, the King heard other tidings. Vaudemont had effected his retreat with scarcely any loss, and thereby saved his army, which soon afterwards joined the

[1] Louis XIV., *Lettres militaires*, viii. p. 224; Racine, *Œuvres*, v. p. 116.

besiegers. For once in his life Louis XIV. lost his self-control. At Marly, where a crowd of ladies and gentlemen saw him dine, his unwonted violence frightened his courtiers, and he broke a cane on the back of an unfortunate servant. Saint-Simon gives an explanation for the scene, which has remained famous though it has been contradicted.

Villeroy, he says, might have partly vindicated himself, had he told his royal master how the Duc du Maine, who was to lead the attack against Vaudemont, had been seized with a sudden panic, had called for his confessor and refused to advance. The story was supported by public rumour and the lampoons of the Dutch gazettes. There is no evidence to show that Louis XIV. ever accused his favourite son of cowardice. He had behaved well at Fleurus under Luxembourg's command, and eye-witnesses of the engagement blamed Villeroy for having refused to give orders for the attack.[1] Neither he nor the Duc du Maine fell into disgrace after the fatal day which led to the fall of Namur. Boufflers, who surrendered the castle after a brave defence, was created a duke and peer ; the King proved a generous master and never punished defeat. His greatest antagonist at last opened the negotiations which made peace possible. When it was concluded at Ryswyck in 1697, Louis XIV. obtained conditions which he had ceased to exact. France kept the frontiers of 1678 and acquired Strasburg, with territories in Alsace and on the Spanish frontier. But the system on which his policy had rested for a quarter of a century was finally sacrificed. Louis XIV. pledged his word of honour that he would not countenance, in any manner, any attempt to subvert or disturb the existing government of England. The cause of James II. was practically,

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 134 ; Chéruel, *Saint-Simon considéré comme historien de Louis XIV.*, p. 623.

not formally given up, but his person and his family remained under the protection of the French monarch. The reluctant Emperor and the defeated Spaniards had to accept the terms of Ryswyck, which were extolled in France as the result of the King's moderation.[1] The reasons which had determined William III. not to protract the war were the disunion among the Allies, the exhaustion of the treasuries both of France and England, and the defection of the Duke of Savoy.

The position of this sovereign was peculiar. He held the mountain passes leading to Italy, and for years the diplomatic skill of French statesmen had failed to detach Victor Amadeo II. from the Grand Alliance. He had an account to settle with the Bourbon dynasty. In his youth he had been treated by Louvois like a vassal and admonished by Louis XIV. like an unruly boy. In 1690 he took his revenge and went over to the Emperor. His native country became the battlefield of contending foes; he was beaten by Catinat, secretly negotiated with the enemy while protesting his zeal for the common cause, and retired from the coalition after having secured the highest price which France could offer. Since Richelieu's days the possession of Casale and Pinerolo had been the aim of French policy. In 1696 the two fortresses passed into the hands of the Duke of Savoy. He concluded his peace with France, joined his troops to those of Catinat, marched into the Milanese, and forced the Allies to submit to his terms and to declare Italy neutral ground. He had also bargained for another reward.

His wife was the daughter of the Duc d'Orléans by his first marriage with Henrietta of England; he had no male issue, but two daughters, who, although still mere children, were alternately offered in marriage at Vienna and Versailles.

[1] Dangeau, *Journal*, Sept. 1697.

The double game lost its point when the balance inclined towards France. One of the stipulations of the treaty with Savoy was the betrothal of the Duke's elder daughter, Marie Adelaïde, with the Duc de Bourgogne.

Victor Amadeo gave a further proof of consummate skill; instead of paying a dowry, he drew up accounts by which he extracted money due to him, he said, for old debts.[1]

His daughter had been born in 1685, and there could be no question of marrying a girl of eleven to a boy of fifteen, but it had been settled that she should leave at once for France. Louis XIV. was so anxious to see her that he went with the Dauphin as far as Montargis, to meet her on the way. From there he wrote to Madame de Maintenon on November 4, 1696: "I arrived at five, the Princess came at six, I received her at her carriage door. She let me speak first, answered very well and with a little air of timidity which would have pleased you. I took her to her rooms by torchlight, so that everybody might see her face. She bore the strain exceedingly well, with charming modesty, although the air was stifling. I examined her closely, because I wanted to report to you what I think about her. She has the most beautiful figure and the most attractive bearing I have ever seen, and is dressed to perfection. Her eyes are sparkling and beautiful; she has dark eyebrows and a quantity of black hair. She is thin, with a large mouth, white, irregular teeth, very well-shaped hands, but of the colour of her age. She speaks little, at least in my presence, and is not at all embarrassed when people gaze at her. I see in their eyes that they like her, and she behaves like a person who has seen the world. She bows

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iii. pp. 132–133, 419 ff.; Comte d'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde*, i.

very badly like an Italian, and looks like one. Her first portrait is good; she doesn't resemble the second one at all. Speaking candidly, as I always do to you, I can say that she pleases me entirely and that I would be sorry if she were handsomer than she is. Everything is as it ought to be, except her bows. After supper I will give you more particulars. I forgot to tell you that she is rather small for her age. Up to now, I succeeded quite wonderfully in making things easy for her, and I intend to do so till we reach Fontainebleau, where I long to be to-morrow." Then followed the postscript: "She is of surprising politeness to me and to my son; she behaves as you yourself might do. . . ."[1]

This touching letter, the only important one which Madame de Maintenon had not the heart to destroy with the rest of the King's correspondence, shows him in the light of a tender father whose affection was at last rewarded. The little Duchesse de Bourgogne made him happy and became the idol of his heart.

The bridegroom had orders to await the royal procession at Nemours. When it came within sight, he escaped from his attendants, began to run, jumped into the King's carriage, covered the Princess's hands with kisses, and, like other young men in a similar position, found nothing to say to her.

At Montargis she had taken leave of her Italian retinue, amounting to no less than six hundred persons. Her father having refused his wife permission to accompany her daughter to France, she was alone among strangers and had to go through the ordeal of court presentations immediately after her arrival at Fontainebleau. Although she looked so small "that she seemed to come out of the King's pocket," she went through the ceremonial with great

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 130–132.

seriousness and dignity.[1] When she saw Madame de Maintenon she threw herself into her arms. "I am too old to be kissed by you," said the Marquise. "Oh, no, not so old as all that," she replied. The crowd was such that Elisabeth Charlotte described the ladies as "tumbling over each other like a pack of cards." She caught hold of Madame de Maintenon's arm, and they managed to keep on their legs on the way to church, where the Te Deum was sung. "Extremely *politique*," was Madame's first impression of the Princess, which never changed.[2]

The ceremony being over, the King conducted her to her apartment, whither Madame de Maintenon followed. He embraced her before taking his leave; the Princess then asked her to be seated, placed herself on her knees, and began a little discourse: "Madame, mamma sends you her compliments, and wants me to beg for your friendship. Please tell me what I have to do in order to win the King's affection." After this she went to bed, and Madame de Maintenon wrote to Turin that this child of eleven was a perfect treasure. To the Archbishop of Paris she expressed herself more soberly: "She is much less ugly than we supposed, and young enough to be properly trained."[3] The education of the Duchesse de Bourgogne became her chief object, and her task was a difficult one. On the morrow after her arrival the Court seemed transformed into a playground; old ladies practised blind man's buff, the Duchesse d'Orléans raced and romped, the King himself forgot his stately bearing, started a menagerie for his granddaughter, petted and fondled her, and made her the centre of the Court. Her education had been

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iii. pp. 272–277.

[2] *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, v. pp. 358–359.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 125–126, 133, 135, 137.

neglected; she never learnt to spell and her handwriting was not readable. But she had great tact, a marked individuality, a fine and buoyant spirit, and real kindness of heart. One day she was found in tears; when asked the cause of her sorrow, she replied that the King and Madame de Maintenon, being so old, she felt certain they were going to die before her.[1] She called him grandpapa, teased and bullied him to her heart's content, danced about in Madame de Maintenon's apartment, called her "my aunt," and succeeded in revolutionising Saint-Cyr. She slipped into the confessional, came out of it exclaiming that all was well, and that she had been admonished with greater severity than St. Mary Magdalen. Instead of letting herself be taught, she presided over one of the classes, where she delivered a lecture on the Last Judgment. Whereupon one of the pupils asked her to inform them where the Valley of Josaphat was situated. She had not the faintest idea, but pertly answered that the question was absurd and that nobody cared to hear anything about it. Then she went to the novitiate, seized a broom, and began to sweep the floors. She insisted on acting in *Esther*, and being unable to do so, was quite content to fill the part of a young Israelite who had just one line to say. When the choice of her confessor, who, according to custom, had to be a Jesuit, was mooted, Madame de Maintenon said to the King: "Don't you give me a stupid man; you know yourself that La Chaize is in his dotage; send him to the Archbishop of Paris; he will choose a proper person among his Jesuit friends."[2] This he did, but the little Princess would have her own way, and changed her confessors as often as she liked.

The Duc de Bourgogne was scolded for attempting

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 211.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 107–108.

LOUIS, DUC DE BOURGOGNE

to see his bride without the King's leave and teased by his youngest brother, Berry, when trying to obey. Only twice a month, and in presence of her Mistress of the Robes, was he allowed to see her. Things underwent no change after the official celebration of the marriage, which took place on December 7, 1697. The pomp and magnificence of the old ceremonial were astounding, even for Versailles. Courtiers ruined themselves in dress and jewellery; they spent sums of up to three hundred thousand livres for Court offices which were for sale, and replenished the King's exchequer by this prodigality. The bride had such quantities of diamonds and rubies stitched on her brocade that she could hardly move and had to be supported. Beauvillier led the bridegroom to the altar. His suit of black velvet was richly embroidered in gold; he wore the ribbon of his order and precious stones glistened on his feathered hat. At fifteen years of age the Duc de Bourgogne was exceedingly handsome; his dark hair fell in rich curls over his shoulders; his features were regular, his large eyes had a fascinating, somewhat melancholy expression; we know him by Rigault's portrait, painted at the time when he pledged his faith to Adelaïde of Savoy. The great Almoner of France, Cardinal de Coislin, blessed the young pair's union. In the evening they were attended in state to their bedroom, where James II. and his Queen handed them the shirts with the prescribed ceremonial. The Court having retired, the Dauphin chatted with them for another quarter of an hour, and then he conducted his son back to his apartments. Banquets, balls, and theatricals followed each other for several days. The Duchesse de Bourgogne thoroughly enjoyed herself, and danced the *menuet* so gracefully that everybody was enchanted. Among the spectators was Nicolò Erizzo, ambassador of the Venetian Republic. He

penned an elaborate account of the royal wedding for the *Serenissima.* "The Duchess," he wrote, "is highly gifted, but *scarsa di bellezza.* Her husband is a serious youth, sufficiently well informed to be called a scholar, and yet of a passionate disposition. It is fondly to be hoped that these two human beings will come to understand each other. At present, and on account of their youth, their souls are no less apart than their persons."

The conclusion of the peace of Ryswyck led to another royal marriage. Elisabeth Charlotte had an only daughter, for whom she despaired of finding a suitable husband. Surrounded as she was by a family and a Court whose sympathies were Jacobite, she boldly bethought herself for a moment of no less a personage than William III., whom she greatly admired, and confided to the Electress Sophia "how she had come to the conclusion that religion spoilt many things in this world, because her daughter could not get the King of England."

The Duke of Lorraine having been reinstated in his possessions, she accepted him as son-in-law, with the characteristic remark: "Happiness being chiefly a thing of the imagination, I think that my daughter will not be unhappy, although her husband is poor and unfortunate enough to be the neighbour of France."[1] Louise d'Orléans, Duchess of Lorraine, became the mother of Francis, consort of Maria Theresa and German Emperor.

The King was most generous to Madame's children. But she complained that the two millions he had promised her son on his marriage had not been paid, that her husband squandered her inheritance and left her in want, and that Madame de Maintenon

[1] *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, v. pp. 358, 363, 364; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 189–190.

estranged her children from her. The truth was that the Marquise liked the Duc de Chartres and would never despair of his future, an optimism which was shared by Fénelon.

The Duc du Maine it was who disappointed his motherly friend. His wife disliked her, escaped her entirely, ruined her husband, who was passionately fond of her, by her eccentricities and her dissipation, and induced him to lead a life of pleasure in the splendid country residence which they acquired in 1700. "The white nights of Sceaux," its theatricals, its revelries, the personal charm of the gifted hostess and the tone which she encouraged, foretold the social changes of another period. She rarely went to Versailles, where Du Maine was in constant attendance on the King. For a time Louis remonstrated, but when he found his son too timid to act upon his advice he would not inflict pain and interfered no more.[1] The affection of Madame de Maintenon for her favourite survived her influence over him, and he was yet destined to play a part in the history of France which darkened the closing scene of her life.

In her own family the only relative who gave her satisfaction was her cousin Villette. He greatly distinguished himself as a naval officer and received honours and promotion, while his charming daughter, Madame de Caylus, incurred the King's displeasure. She had a lover, the Duc de Villeroy, son of the Marshal; their relations were an open scandal and, worse than this, she belonged to the Duchesse de Bourbon's intimates. They spent their time drinking hard, playing for high stakes at cards, and writing down epigrams, stories and songs, in which they ridiculed the vices and the hypocrisy of the courtiers,

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries de Lundi*, iii. p. 56 ff.; Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 73, 192–194.

and did not spare the King himself.[1] He never liked Madame de Caylus, feared her intrigues, and practically, if not formally, exiled her to Paris. There she led a gay life, displayed the talents which had enchanted Racine on the stage of Saint-Cyr, and enjoyed a popularity which compensated for the loss of royal favour. Madame de Maintenon, who speaks of Versailles as of a place of safety when compared with the depravity of Paris, had to resign herself to a separation which lasted for years.[2] Meanwhile her brother d'Aubigné continued to spend money, to clamour for more and to demand all the preferments he could get. Although the life he led was a disgrace to his sister, he never exhausted her patience; she did for him what she would have scorned to do for herself, and consented in 1681 to transactions which, though tolerated by public opinion and generally practised, were abuses, if not actual frauds, and which led to a big pension being paid him by the farmers-general.[3] She had him transferred from one lucrative post to another; she took care of an illegitimate son of his, who died before her, and did not give up the hope of winning him back from a life of disorder and profligacy to a respectable existence. When he died in 1704, she confessed that his end, which was penitent, was the only satisfaction he had ever given her.[4] He had ceased to live with his wife. Madame de Maintenon provided for her, and bore with her insufferable temper for the sake of her brother's only child. This daughter, born in 1684, was adopted and brought up by her aunt at

[1] Madame Dunoyer, *Lettres*, &c., i. p. 12; Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, notice hist., pp. 17, 21, 75; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 237.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 84; Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, juin-juillet 1695.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. 202, 208; iv. p. 299.

[4] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 292, 293, notes, 294–301; xi. p. 286; Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 297.

Versailles. She became the playmate of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and was married in 1698 to the Comte d'Ayen, eldest son of the Marshal Duc de Noailles and nephew of the Archbishop of Paris. The whole Court and the royal family attended the splendid wedding, to which the bride's parents were admitted. According to the custom then in fashion, Madame de Maintenon and her niece received the congratulations of their illustrious visitors magnificently dressed and placed on beds fitted up for the occasion. The King gave lavishly, not only the exorbitant sum of eight hundred thousand livres, but costly presents and high distinctions, which were another source of wealth.[1] Madame de Maintenon made Madame d'Ayen sole heiress of her fortune. The future of the illustrious house of Noailles seems to have been dearer to her than the niece of whom she had but a poor opinion. "She has faults which I dare not reveal to her husband, for fear of disgusting him with her," she wrote to the Archbishop. "Her mind is undeveloped; she needs constant advice. . . . I count upon you." Her doubts about the young lady were not unfounded; she was her father's daughter, and gave trouble to her aunt.[2]

Though Madame de Maintenon had abused the King's generosity on behalf of the house of Noailles, she sharply told her relatives after d'Aubigné's death that she would do nothing more for them.[3]

In that year (1698) the King assembled a whole army in camp at Compiègne. He wanted to convince Europe that long wars had not exhausted the power of France, and the military show afforded the opportunity

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, v. pp. 122–128 et notes; xxii. p. 193 ff.; Duc de Noailles, *Histoire de Madame de Maintenon*, iv. pp. 608–615; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. pp. 209, 306, 326, 328, 331, 333.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 227, 233.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii. p. 454, note 6, 1705; xiv. p. 262; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, v. pp. 324–325.

of testing the soldier-like qualities of his grandson, who was nominally in command, and whose career began on the very spot where another Duke of Burgundy and his English allies had vanquished Joan of Arc more than two centuries before. The manœuvres, which lasted three weeks, were so seriously conducted that they cost human lives. The Duc de Bourgogne himself was nearly drowned while crossing the river on horseback; he shared all the hardships of the soldiers, would tolerate no exception in his favour and left the task of representation to Marshal Boufflers, his master in the art of war, who ruined himself in banquets and festivals. It was the old story of officers running into debt for the sake of parading their troops in new uniforms and equipment. Paris reaped a golden harvest by supplying material and provisions; the King could truly say "that he carried the administration of his forces and all the details of the service in his head." Louvois had taught him how to organise the first of the permanent armies, which remained part of the political system of Europe.

Surrounded by the royal ladies and by his Court, he witnessed the final scene, an attack on Compiègne, from the walls of the beleaguered town. Madame de Maintenon was present; on the poles of her sedan chair sat in her usual spirits and in high glee the Duchesse de Bourgogne; next to her stood Louis XIV., hat in hand; when he spoke to the Marquise and explained to her what was going on, she just lowered the glass to listen to him, then raised it again as she was afraid of the draught on account of her rheumatism. Meanwhile Saint-Simon looked on and fumed with rage. He speaks of "the stupor" of the whole army at this humiliating sight. No other sign of such a moral revolt is to be traced. French soldiers had been accustomed to the presence of triumphant mistresses; the days of La Vallière and Montespan

MADAME DE MAINTENON
From the painting by Mignard

belonged to the past; the position of Madame de Maintenon did not give offence, and was no longer discussed. The hero of the hour was the heir to the throne. He was young, attractive, indefatigable and brave, but more of a scholar than a soldier. His life was chiefly spent in his library, where he read Tacitus and Plato's *Republic*, studied mathematics, astronomy, and military sciences, although he made no secret of his aversion for war. He loved music and pictures. Madame describes his gallery, which contained masterpieces, portraits of French kings, heroes, poets, and fair ladies. Madame de Maintenon was there as Mignard painted her in the garb of her patron saint, and Madame Guyon, Fénelon, and Bossuet hung by the side of great Jansenists.[1] In this retreat, which he loved, the young Prince collected reports from the administrators of the different provinces, which were handed to him with his grandfather's consent. He also consulted the aristocratic reformer Boulainvilliers and became well acquainted with the economic conditions of France and with the details of its administration.

On his return from Compiègne the King raised no further objection to his grandchildren's union. For once Madame de Maintenon's educational theories had signally failed. The Duchesse de Bourgogne was lovable, frivolous, and totally undisciplined. Her grimaces, her boisterous behaviour at meals, her constant breaches of etiquette drove Elisabeth Charlotte to desperation. "She is like an ape; they will come to regret not having whipped her instead of admiring and spoiling her as they do," she reported.[2] The little Princess would not look at her and found her grandfather, "Monsieur," rather ridiculous. She jumped on the King's knees, opened his letters, and read in

[1] *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, v. pp. 390–391.
[2] *Ibid.*, v. pp. 368–369.

one of them a severe criticism of her behaviour. On the eve of her marriage Madame de Maintenon presented her with a jewel casket. It also contained rules of life. She was told to obey her husband in everything, to devote herself to him, to have no other friend in the world, to show no jealousy, to give her whole heart to him, and to expect nothing in return. After her death the paper was found neatly folded in her desk.

The advice of the Marquise profited, not her, but her husband. Before his marriage Spanheim described him as the most hopeful of the European princes, but somewhat morose and unamiable. For his wife's sake he became worldly and shared in all her frivolities. Balls and *mascarades*, her favourite amusements, were protracted into Lent because she found carnival-time too short for them. Louis XIV. let her go to Paris, where she attended the opera, the theatres, and mixed with the crowd at popular fairs. Bourgogne had to humour her in everything ; he sang in Lully's *Alceste*, they acted together with the famous comedian Baron, and visited country residences. One of them belonged to the Duc d'Antin, Madame de Montespan's only legitimate son. He was the very model of a courtier and his most ambitious dreams were realised when the King consented to take his grandchildren to his house. He admired everything, but objected to a walk the trees of which shut out the view from his windows. When he awoke next morning the trees were gone. "I am glad not to have displeased the King too," said Madame de Maintenon. "The Duc d'Antin would have compelled me to spend the night in the open."[1] At Fontainebleau, at Trianon, at Marly, nights were turned into day ;[2] the Duchesse de Bourgogne milked cows, made butter,

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, v. : "Le duc d'Antin."
[2] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, ii. pp. 346, 372.

ordered fireworks, loved regattas, and induced the exhausted Marquise to row in her boat. After a few days spent with the Duc and Duchesse de Bourbon, who gave her a splendid reception, she reached Paris at five o'clock in the morning, went to market, bought fruit, attended mass, drove back to Versailles, surprised the King in his bed, dropped into hers and slept till the evening. "I pity her for being brought up so badly," exclaimed Madame. But she, too, relented when she found her in tears at her daughter's wedding.

Those who were responsible for the Duchesse de Bourgogne felt relieved when she sent one day for her confessor, a Jesuit who had been missionary in China. When he came, she consulted him about the Chinese costume which she intended to wear at the next fancy ball, and, highly delighted at the embarrassment with which he protested he knew nothing about it, sent him away. Matters became more serious when she took to playing cards. The King encouraged this sort of amusement, which kept his courtiers from meddling with his affairs. He paid for those who could not afford high stakes, and gambling in every form went on daily at Versailles. The Duchesse de Bourgogne was passionately fond of lansquenet and lost so heavily that she had to appeal for help to Madame de Maintenon. She implored her pardon, promised solemnly to give up playing if only her debts were paid, was scolded and forgiven, and took to cards again with undiminished zest. Her husband had also played and lost and gone to his grandfather in a repentant mood. Louis XIV. gave him all the money wanted; he was glad, he said, that Bourgogne trusted him; people of their condition could afford to lose.[1]

Fénelon's work trembled in the balance. What

[1] Dangeau, *Journal*, viii. p. 283.

was to be expected if Télémaque prevaricated? In 1701 there came a total change. The Duchesse de Bourgogne fell so dangerously ill that her life was despaired of. She recovered, however, and Bourgogne wrote to Beauvillier that, having deserved punishment and found mercy, he would prove grateful.[1] The two years he had spent unworthily filled him with remorse. He did not dance, act, or play any more; he avoided all entertainments, and did not appear in public except at official Court functions; sacred music was his only pastime and he ceased going to the play. "Would you entirely forbid such things, if you were the master, or would you share the views of those who think that operas and comedies are more harmless than other pastimes?" observed Madame de Maintenon. "I would carefully weigh what is to be said on both sides," he replied, "and then I would choose the lesser evil."[2]

Saint-Simon mentions that Bourgogne, like all the Bourbons, was fond of the pleasures of the table, and that he was a hearty drinker. He gave that up too; a few costly wine-coolers which he had ordered for his private use disappeared and the money went to the poor. He did not accept an increase of his monthly allowance offered him by the King. His intercourse with women was marked by a restraint amounting to rudeness. He had no humour and resented practical jokes, in which his wife indulged with conspicuously bad taste. His behaviour to her was that of an over-fond lover: "Pious, amorous, scrupulous"—such was the verdict of Madame de Maintenon, who greatly feared that he would end by estranging his wife from him.[3] "Stupefied by piety,

[1] De Vogüé, *Le duc de Bourgogne et le duc de Beauvillier*, &c., p. 118.

[2] Abbé Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin*, &c., ii. p. 178.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Correspondance authentique*, ii. pp. 6, 61, 94, 146, 316.

lame and hunchbacked into the bargain," wrote Elisabeth Charlotte; "A novice or seminarist," sneered Saint-Simon. He let them talk, criticise, and mock at him. The day came when they all admired him and reverenced his memory as that of a saint.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

At the opening of the new century, Charles II., the childless King of Spain, was nearing his end. In view of an extinction of the Habsburg dynasty at Madrid, treaties and renunciations had succeeded each other ever since 1659. At that date Philip IV. had given his eldest daughter in marriage to Louis XIV. after she had solemnly resigned her claims to the succession. The condition of the renunciation was the payment of her dowry; it was not fulfilled, and the national authorities in Spain had not confirmed the transaction.

In 1668, in spite of the will of Philip IV., which eventually gave the succession to Austria, the Emperor, who at that time was also childless, would have consented to a partition. In 1689 he was promised the undivided monarchy of Spain for his second son, Archduke Charles. It was the price offered by the Maritime Powers for his joining the coalition against France and had no practical results. The Archduke was the son of a second marriage; the legal heir under the will of Philip IV. was the Emperor's daughter by his Spanish wife, who married Max Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria. Her father required her to surrender her claim, so that the house of Wittelsbach should not deprive the Habsburgs of their inheritance. But in 1692 the Electress gave birth to a son. After Ryswyck he became the candidate of William III., for the very reason that his accession in Spain might yet save the peace of Europe. Louis XIV. had never

given up his claims, but he agreed to the partition treaty, which gave Spain and the Indies to the Bavarian and left Italy and the Low Countries to be divided. To the Spaniards, who had not been consulted, the dismemberment of the monarchy was an insufferable insult. When the partition treaty became known to them in November 1698, Charles II. in his distress changed his mind. He gave up the Archduke and made the candidate of France and England sole heir to his possessions. This will became null and void six months later, when the little Bavarian Prince died of smallpox at Brussels.

The choice lay again between a Habsburg and a Bourbon if the integrity of the monarchy was to be maintained. The partisans of the electoral Prince passed over to France, whose military superiority Spain had experienced, and who alone was strong enough to prevent the disruption of the Empire, now that the Emperor could count no more upon England. While the Austrian party at Madrid was still strong enough to extract from the King another will in favour of the Archduke, William concluded a second treaty of partition with Louis XIV. The Archduke was to have Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands, but the Italian possessions were to go to the Bourbons, with the provision that the Duke of Lorraine was to exchange his dominions for the Milanese. By this settlement France would have extended and fortified her frontiers, and the advantages were so great that the King's loyalty was not suspected. The execution of the treaty depended on the Emperor's consent; he refused to give it, because he would not sacrifice the Italian possessions, which were invaluable to Austria. Since 1698 France had been represented at Madrid by a clever and distinguished officer, the Marquis d'Harcourt. He was the son of Beuvron, in bygone days one of the intimates of Scarron's society, and he

relied on the protection of Madame de Maintenon, who never forgot old friends.[1] D'Harcourt was for the succession, but he was hampered by instructions, which limited his action. He came to despair of his cause and asked for his recall. In May 1700 he left Madrid and gave a report to the King and also to Madame de Maintenon about the state of affairs,[2] while Blécourt, who succeeded him, had to debate with the Spaniards about the treaty of partition. The indignation which it excited enabled the Council of State to press for a solution. Charles II. was sinking, and would not give up the hope of an heir. He had passed out of the hands of physicians, whose skill was exhausted, into those of obscure and ignorant friars who exorcised him. But he was still able to put his name to State documents. The dying King appealed to the dying Pope: was he justified, he asked, in making the grandson of Louis XIV. sole heir to his twenty-two crowns? Innocent XII. was French in his sympathies, yet he hesitated before giving an answer. "The question of conscience," says Voltaire, "was treated like a State transaction by the Pope, while the State transaction was a question of conscience for the King."[3]

The final decision of Rome put his conscience at rest. On October 3, 1700, he signed the will, drawn up by Cardinal Porto-Carrero and the French party, which disinherited his family, and left Spain, with all its dependencies, to the Duc d'Anjou, second son of the Dauphin. If he ever came to the throne of France, his younger brother Berry was to succeed him. The primary condition was that the two crowns

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. pp. 289–290.

[2] Reynald, *Louis XIV.*, &c., ii. p. 250; Hippeau, *L'Avènement des Bourbons*, ii. p. 19; Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., i. p. 130.

[3] Hippeau, *L'Avènement des Bourbons*, ii. pp. 28–29, 227–230; Torcy, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 87–88; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. pp. 245, 280–282, notes; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xvii.

should never be united. This applied equally to the Austrian dynasty. The Archduke was to be King if the French line became extinct; but if he came to the throne, the Spanish crown passed to the house of Savoy. The Duc d'Orléans, although nearer than the Archduke through his Spanish mother, Anne of Austria, was excluded from the succession with the object of putting a pressure upon Louis XIV. If he refused to accept the will, the Austrian took his place.

For a short time the secret was kept. On September 28 Blécourt reported that the Archduke would be elected; at the beginning of October he spoke of rumours in favour of the French candidature; but Charles was still alive when Blécourt learnt the truth, which Beauvillier would not believe when the envoy of Florence first made it known to him through the Marquis de Louville.[1]

On November 4 Louis XIV. conferred with Marshal Tallard, his ambassador in London, and with Torcy, his Secretary of State, in Madame de Maintenon's apartments. Tallard had negotiated the partition treaty. He stood up for it with great energy and his words carried conviction. On that same day the King sent word to William that he would fulfil his engagements in spite of any offers that might be made him. He also assured Leopold that he would never accept the whole succession. When this happened he did not know that Charles II. had died on November 6. The French courier who carried the news and a copy of the will broke down at Bayonne, where D'Harcourt was in command of the army which stood ready on the Spanish frontier. He had orders to open all dispatches which came from Madrid,

[1] Louville, *Mémoires secrets*, i. p. 20; Hippeau, *Avènement des Bourbons*, &c., ii. pp. 277, 283, 285; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. p. 285, note 1.

and sent another courier, not to Torcy, but to his friend Barbézieux, who was, like himself, in favour of the acceptance of the will. On November 9 the courier arrived at Fontainebleau, and Barbézieux hastened with his message to the King, who did not betray the slightest emotion.[1] The Court was merely informed of the Spanish monarch's death, but rumours were current, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne spoke freely: "The King," she said, "would be very foolish if he refused the crown of Spain for his grandson." On that same afternoon the Dauphin, Beauvillier, Torcy, and the Chancellor, Pontchartrain, were summoned to Madame de Maintenon's apartment, where a council was held. The Dauphin showed unwonted energy, and respectfully but firmly claimed his inheritance; he was ready, he said, to give it up to his son, but to nobody else. Pontchartrain exposed the situation in a long and elaborate speech, and left the decision to the King. Beauvillier stood up for the treaty, because the acceptance of the succession must lead to a war which would be the ruin of France. Torcy, who a few days before had agreed with Tallard, now changed his mind; Austria had not consented to the treaty, and was no less opposed to the partition than to the acceptance of the will; war being unavoidable, it was better to fight for Spain than against her.[2] Louis XIV. reserved his decision, spent the evening at Madame de Maintenon's in company with Torcy and Barbézieux, and next morning held another council. After four hours' deliberation, he accepted the will of Charles II.

On both occasions Madame de Maintenon was present, and had been consulted. "Madame, what do you say to all this?" the King asked. Her answer

[1] Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. p. 411; Sourches, *Mémoires*, vi. pp. 300–301.
[2] Torcy, *Mémoires*, p. 551 ff.; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. p. 293 ff.; notes, p. 304, 1; 306, 2, 3; 308, 1; 309, 3; Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. p. 412.

is recorded by the Marquis de Louville, who, being a member of the young Prince's household, was on intimate terms with Beauvillier. "This lady," so Louville says, "made a splendid defence. She omitted nothing which might shake the King's conviction that the alliance with Spain would prove everlasting. She very appropriately spoke of the house of Austria, from which he was descended, and which was his deadly foe. She reminded the King that his word was pledged, because she knew that this motive would prove more powerful than all the others. Barbézieux challenged her with such vehemence that she was obliged to call for help, and this touched the King's heart. But it was her last effort; she relapsed into silence, and the Bourbons annexed a second empire."[1] This statement is corroborated by her words to Noailles: "Everybody seems delighted with Spain. Very wise people are convinced that war will be avoided, whereas we would have been involved in a long and disastrous war if the treaty had been carried out."[2]

To him she made no secret of an opposition, of which there is no further trace in her letters to others.

On November 15 the Court left Fontainebleau for Versailles. Next morning the Spanish ambassador was received in audience by the King. He found him alone with the Duc d'Anjou, and was invited to pay homage to his sovereign. The Spaniard knelt down, kissed hands, and complimented him in his own language. Louis XIV., who spoke Spanish, answered for his grandson, and the doors having been thrown open, he solemnly addressed the assembled Court: "By right of inheritance and by the late King's

[1] Louville, *Mémoires secrets*, &c., i. pp. 17, 28; Michelet, *Histoire de France*, xiv. p. 127.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 344, 375.

will, in accordance with the wishes and entreaties of the Spanish nation, Philip V. is called to the throne. It was the will of God." His voice trembled when he said to the new King: "Be a good Spaniard —this is your first duty; but remember that you are a Frenchman and that you have to promote the union of the two nations. Their own happiness and the peace of Europe depend upon it." The historical words, "Les Pyrenées sont fondues," were uttered, not by Louis XIV., but by the Spanish ambassador.

Philippe d'Anjou, born in 1687 and brought up by Beauvillier, whose religious principles guided his whole life, was a silent, apathetic youth, who, like the Duc de Bourgogne, was remarkably truthful and straightforward. Whenever the jolly and boisterous Berry provoked his elder brother's patience, the good-natured Anjou, who never gave trouble, interfered between them. "If he were an ordinary gentleman," said Elisabeth Charlotte, "he would be called an honest man." She praises his generosity and his physical strength, "as great as that of the King of Poland," and remarks that, in outward appearance, he was a Habsburg, not a Bourbon.[1] Madame de Maintenon, who had seen little of him before these eventful days, was disagreeably impressed by the slowness of his speech, but struck, like everybody else, by the quiet dignity and the Castilian *grandezza* with which he accepted the royal honours paid him by his father and by the King himself. His evenings were regularly spent with Madame de Maintenon, at play in company with his brothers, with whom he freely enjoyed his last hours of liberty.[2] She became so truly fond of Philip that she wished she had seen less of him when

[1] *Briefe*, &c., bei Ranke, v. p. 380; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vii. p. 328; Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. p. 420 ff.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 344, 347, 350, 378.

PHILIP V. OF SPAIN
From the painting by Rigaud

the hour of parting came on December 4, 1700. Large crowds, carriages and troops lined the avenue leading from Versailles to Sceaux, where the King and the royal family bade farewell to Philip. "Everybody was in tears," wrote Madame; "the Dauphin was so terribly *touché*, and embraced his son with such tenderness, that I was afraid they would both die of grief. The dear King kissed me most affectionately; he too cried so bitterly that he was unable to speak. 'Tant pis,' said the King of Spain, when they told him that everything was ready. Nothing was seen but pocket-handkerchiefs and red eyes; men and women sobbed aloud."[1]

Madame de Maintenon relied for information on two Frenchmen who went with Philip to Spain. One of them was D'Ayen, the husband of her niece. He was young and frivolous, and his chief employment was to amuse his royal master with Court gossip supplied by the Marquise. In return he sent her a relation of Philip's triumphal progress from the Spanish frontier to Madrid. The populations applauded; he saw bull-fights and the splendours of clerical Spain. At Burgos he was received by a smart abbess in magnificent robes who reigned over sixty towns and villages and fourteen convents; she nominated and examined the confessors of her nuns, suspended priests, and obeyed neither King nor bishop, but only the Pope. The inhabitants of the rural districts through which they passed are described by D'Ayen as "lazy beggars"—"très-villains et très-pauvres."[2] French eyes were accustomed to scenes such as these; they interfered neither with the King's amusements nor with the enthusiasm of the official receptions, with which he was greeted as he went along. D'Harcourt, the responsible agent of Louis XIV.,

[1] *Briefe*, &c., bei Ranke, v. pp. 382–383.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne*, iv. pp. 391–410.

never lost sight of Philip. He had been made a duke and French ambassador at Madrid, where he acted as Prime Minister. Madame de Maintenon corresponded with him, but she avoided speaking of State affairs. "Nothing can exceed the wisdom of the King's parting words to his grandson," she says in her first letter. "He wants him to be a good Spaniard, to love his people, to dismiss all Frenchmen whose conduct gives dissatisfaction, never to take their part against his own subjects, to apply himself to business, and to decide nothing for himself before he has acquired the necessary experience. Your Roman virtue will appreciate these lessons."[1] She did not come back to the subject. At Madrid it was Philip who asked for her advice; he wanted her to tell him the truth. "With God's help," he said, "I shall try to improve and to become a King after His heart. My gratitude and affection are known to you. Pray believe that I shall always feel as I did when I parted from you."[2] He complained of her silence; yet she could not bring herself to believe that advice offered at such distance could do any good; she "detested things leading to nothing," and limited herself to questions concerning Philip's relations with the royal family and his personal welfare.

To D'Harcourt she wrote rarely. When his health forced him to leave his post in the autumn of 1701, he became her adviser in all matters concerning Spain, and they worked together. She employed herself on his behalf and was accused of unduly encouraging his ambitions, which aimed at nothing less than the ministry, which he never attained.[3] But he was made a marshal of France, he commanded armies, and was

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 350.
[2] Ibid., pp. 348, 410–411, 424.
[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xi. pp. 54, note 9, 55, note 2, 381 ; xii. pp. 67, 225, &c. &c.

considered one of the best heads, and one of the most charming men in the King's service. His gifts and his merit raised him above tortuous intrigues. Only a woman whose whole tone of mind was averse to them would have written confidentially as she did: "Those who attend Councils of State are bound to secrecy. It is a blessing for us all that the King's orders prevent me from revealing what I saw and what I heard. I am deeply depressed by present affairs and the thought of those which will have to be decided in the future. This single instance convinces me that I would die of grief had I to attend councils. Monarchs are to be pitied and men are wicked. If we did not remember that God is patient, and that He requires us to be patient too, we would indeed despair."[1]

At the same time the public knew that she made bishops and cardinals, that ecclesiastical matters depended chiefly on her and that she governed Noailles, who, to a great extent, governed the French Church.[2] Rome counted upon her. In November 1700 a new Pope, Albani, Clement XI., was elected by the support of the French party. He sent her a brief in which he spoke of "the rare perfections with which it had pleased God to adorn her person." He did not fail to praise her true submission to the Holy See on the eve of another crisis, in which her zeal surpassed his expectations.

Men very naturally came to the conclusion that an influence so powerful in the Church was not likely to be passive in the State. The first minister of her choice was said to be Pontchartrain. This very distinguished lawyer had begun his career under Colbert, who made him president of the Parliament at Rennes, where he rendered excellent service. At Madame de

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 263.
[2] Ibid., pp. 241–243, 244, 247, &c. &c.

Maintenon's request, he undertook the management of the secular side at Saint-Cyr, a charge which became the stepping-stone of his fortune and of that of his colleagues Chamillart and Voysin,[1] who succeeded each other at the Treasury. In 1689 Pontchartrain most reluctantly accepted this arduous post, to which the King added the navy, and made him a minister of State: "I have nothing to expect now but my downfall," Pontchartrain wrote to a friend.[2] His chief protector had been Louvois. The new minister was highly gifted, modest and hard-working; he had to provide, not only for the expenditure of the Court, but for a ruinous war, and to face the terrible famine of 1693. It is a blot on his memory that he enriched himself while starving populations were mercilessly taxed. Fénelon's indictment against unjust and cruel ministers stands against him. Other contemporaries vary in their judgment of the administrator; they all agree when speaking of his indomitable spirit, his generosity, and the charm of his personal intercourse.[3] Pontchartrain had an excellent wife, whose noble qualities endeared her to Madame de Maintenon.[4] She supported them both, and for a time she could rely on Pontchartrain. Differences of opinion in ecclesiastical matters contributed to estrange them.[5] Pontchartrain, who was no courtier, and did not keep to his place, was a strong Gallican, whose views were those of the French magistracy to which he belonged. He sided with Pomponne, one of the King's best and most honourable servants. Louvois had been the cause of

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vi. pp. 279, note 3, 297, note 7.
[2] Bibliothèque nationale, MS., France, 17424, fol. 43.
[3] N. Erizzo, *Relazioni*, 1699; P. Venier, *Relazioni*, 1695; Gourville, *Mémoires*, pp. 590–591; Choisy, *Mémoires*, p. 603; D'Argenson, *Essais*, pp. 190–192.
[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. pp. 258, 275.
[5] Ibid., iv. pp. 258, 420.

Pomponne's disgrace in 1679. The recall of this member of the Arnauld family after Louvois' death in 1691 is an instance in point of Madame de Sévigné's sound judgment when speaking of Madame de Maintenon: "She was more ready to forward the interests of her friends than to injure those of her opponents."

Pomponne, who was devoted to the King personally, was accused of culpable timidity by the Jansenists, because he never dared to advocate their cause.[1] Pontchartrain was of a different nature; he was one of the first to denounce Quietism as a party which might become dangerous to the State; he tolerated no encroachments of the ecclesiastical power, staunchly defended the Gallican liberties against Rome and ended his days at the Oratory, the members of which were friendly to the Jansenists.[2] He did not join them, but made no distinction in favour of opinions or of persons, and pronounced judgment against Madame de Maintenon's friend, the Bishop of Chartres, in a lawsuit between this prelate and his chapter. She asked the King to interfere, and the judgment was cancelled.[3]

When this happened, Pontchartrain was no longer minister, but Chancellor. His nomination to the first dignity in France was interpreted by some people as a disgrace. According to them, Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon wanted to get rid of him and to replace him by a more subservient man in the person of Michel Chamillart.[4] He was a Parliamentary judge when he first attracted attention by his adroitness at billiards. Vendôme and Villeroy mentioned him to the King, who was very fond of the game, and soon grew to like his new partner, to whom he gave rooms

[1] Saint-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. pp. 198–201, 315, 465, 467.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vi. App.; xiv. pp. 561–563.
[3] Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. p. 354.
[4] Daguesseau, *Œuvres*, xiii. p. 80; Phélippeau, *Mémoires inédits*, vi. p. 289, note 6; Saint-Simon.

at Versailles in 1686. Chamillart, born in 1652, was an excellent and most charming man. Those who doubted his abilities admired the integrity of his character. He did not abuse the King's familiarity, attended to his duties, and was introduced by Louis XIV. to Madame de Maintenon, who liked him from the first. He had the gentlemanly qualities which most appealed to her, great kindness of heart, unfailing probity and straightforwardness, no vanity, sincere religious convictions, and such winning ways that his fortune excited no envy. His subordinates were devoted to him. The King wanted men who were entirely dependent on himself, and gave Chamillart a high appointment in the department of finance. There he schooled himself for nine years, and in 1699 he replaced Pontchartrain at the head of the department and soon after was made a minister of State. "The nomination of Monsieur Chamillart will be welcome to you," Madame de Maintenon wrote to D'Harcourt; "you will regret that Monsieur de Barbézieux's is postponed. I am entirely of your opinion, but all that is required is a little patience."[1] D'Harcourt had to be conciliated as Barbézieux was his intimate friend. A few weeks later, in January 1701, this gifted son of Louvois died suddenly. Chamillart succeeded him at the War Office and people spoke ironically of "Colbert and Louvois in one person." When he pleaded his insufficiency, the King promised to share his burden, acted for years as his own Secretary for War, and congratulated himself on the somewhat rare piece of good luck of "having been approved in his choice by public opinion."[2] Madame de Maintenon did not share this optimism; she relied on Chamillart's excellent intentions, but she was despondent and justly

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 350.

[2] Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. p. 146; Daguesseau, *Œuvres*, xiii. pp. 79–80; Grimoard, *Œuvres de Louis XIV.*, i. Préface.

afraid "of his having too many affairs on hand."[1] She saw him frequently; he used to send her reports, and she relied on him for the alleviation of public misery. A curious paper, dated 1699, is attributed to her by La Beaumelle,[2] whose documents are often more trustworthy than his narrative. This is one containing instructions for Chamillart before he took office and indicates one of the causes of her opposition to Pontchartrain. "For a long time people have complained of a confederacy which is supposed to exist between the Controller-General and business men, who combine for the monarchy's ruin. It is true that the Controller-General is often too lenient with them and that they obtain things which are wrong by granting from time to time extraordinary supplies. It would be a mistake to alienate business men, who, in the present condition of affairs, are a great resource to the State, but they have no right to special privilege for their claims. They can never be trusted; they are the scum of the nation, their very virtues are selfish; public calamities are welcome to them. They are hungry wolves, ready to swallow the whole realm, were it given as prey to their avidity. Their magnificence makes them popular in Paris and profits the artisans there, but the provinces justly complain of their vexations. They ought to be constantly watched, and all denunciations against them must be carefully examined."

Of the same date as this instruction is Bois-Guillebert's *Détail de la France*, published in 1699. Its author was personally known to Chamillart, and to the present day the book, which his contemporaries failed to understand, is one of the best sources of information about the state of France between 1688

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 289, 372; Abbé Esnault, *Chamillart*, i. pp. 5–7.

[2] La Beaumelle, *Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon*, livre xii. chap. vii.

and 1698.[1] The miserable condition of the rural population is chiefly attributed by Bois-Guillebert to two causes. Customs in the interior prevented the free exchange of goods from one province to the other and taxes were unequally distributed. In most provinces they were levied by the farmers-general, who had to pay an annual sum to the Treasury, and divided the surplus between themselves. The rich came to terms with the financiers, the defenceless poor had to pay, first the dreaded *taille*, from which the privileged classes were exempted, then the tithe, which went to them. The heaviest burden the peasantry had to bear was the *corvée*, which during part of the year exacted personal unrequited labour. The reforms proposed by Bois-Guillebert were moderate. He pleaded for a more just and equitable distribution of the *taille*. On his advice Chamillart tried the new system in one province, the Orléanais. It failed on account of the ill-will of his officials, who were entirely opposed to it. In 1695 Pontchartrain had introduced a new imposition, the poll-tax, to which, as first intended, all classes without exception had to contribute, but from which the privileged few managed to escape. Bois-Guillebert proposed, and Chamillart reintroduced, another similar tax. He did not, however, dare to attempt the abolition of the inner customs and other hindrances, "which prevented France from trafficking with France." Another invaluable adviser got no hearing, except from the Duc de Bourgogne.[2] Vauban, the greatest living authority, not only on military matters, but on fiscal and economic questions, sent reports to the ministers in which he advocated a radical reform of the existing system of taxation and the abolition of all

[1] Cadet, *Pierre de Bois-Guillebert*; De Boislisle, *Correspondance des contrôleurs-généraux des finances avec les intendants de Province*; Félix Rocquain, *Études sur l'ancienne France: La misère au temps de Louis XIV.*

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv. pp. 323–344, 336; App. xii. pp. 573, 599

privileges. He calculated that in 1694, after six years of war, the farmers-general and their subordinates had gained over one hundred millions. In April 1700 Chamillart made them pay back twenty millions to the Treasury; he did so without causing a scandal or having recourse to extreme measures, "which would have done more harm than good."[1] Besides, the King would not have sanctioned them. Seven years later, when Vauban, "the most virtuous man in France," and one of the King's greatest servants, anonymously published his *Project de Dîme royale*, the book was destroyed by order of Pontchartrain, and only the author's death saved him from disgrace. Bois-Guillebert, who did not share Vauban's views, then published another famous work, *Factum de la France*, and was exiled, although Chamillart never ceased to protect him.

Louis XIV. refused to alter his system of government. Chamillart had recourse to ruinous expedients in order to find money, and gave up in despair all plans of reform. Knowing the King as she did, Madame de Maintenon had excuses for overrating the conscientious man, of whom she said "that he had not a minister's heart." He was loyal to the King, and shared all her sympathies for the poor populations she was daily asked to help.[2] When he broke down under his burden and implored the King to let him go, Louis XIV. answered his request in a marginal note: "Well, we must perish together."[3] His only chance was the preservation of peace: "We ought to ask for it in sackcloth and ashes," exclaimed Madame de Maintenon, when the terror of another war made her heart bleed for France.[4]

[1] Depping, *Correspondance administrative*, &c., p. 319.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. iv. p. 462.
[3] Abbé Esnault, *Michel Chamillart*, ii. pp. 154–164; A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites de Madame des Ursins*, p. 305.
[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 309, 372.

For a time it seemed as if a general war could be averted. Spain had welcomed Philip V., the Pope and rival dynasties in Portugal, Bavaria, and Savoy acknowledged him as King. William more than suspected that Louis XIV. had made the treaty in order to get the will; he could not as yet renew the alliance with the Emperor, but he advised him to begin the attack, now that peace with Turkey had disengaged his forces and that he could count upon the house of Hanover, for which he had secured the Electorate, and upon the house of Bradenburg, whose sovereign he had made King of Prussia in January 1701. Yet William observed and Louis XIV. knew, that in England everybody preferred the will to the treaty.[1] Commercial interests and the pacific spirit prevailed in England and Holland, and public opinion in both countries left him no choice but to recognise Philip of Anjou in April 1701. Spain and its dependencies were on the side of France; the Duke of Savoy was in command of the army which held the Milanese against Austria, and there also the prospects were favourable to Louis XIV. He held his Court at Versailles with undiminished splendour. "At Marly we are like people who have nothing to do," Madame de Maintenon bitterly remarked. Marly was finished, and had cost treasures. But Marly and Versailles, so the King said, were for his courtiers; he wanted a retreat for himself. "He has Trianon in his head," the Marquise wrote to Noailles in the tone in which she sometimes spoke to him of Louis XIV., and nothing was spared to complete Trianon.

[1] Ranke, *Französische Geschichte*, iv. p. 170, Louis XIV. au d'Harcourt, 29 Nov. 1700; Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, i. pp. 254, 255.

CHAPTER XII

DEATH OF "MONSIEUR"—FAULTS OF LOUIS XIV.—PHILIP V. IN SPAIN

THE first shadow which fell on the scene took the form of a family quarrel. Monsieur had immediately protested against the article of the will which excluded his house from the Spanish succession. In November 1700, and before the King's final determination had been made known, it was rumoured that the Duc de Chartres intended to go to Spain secretly and assert his rights. Soon afterwards, his father and Dubois encouraged his resolve to take service under Philip V., and the King's permission was asked. He refused it in April 1701. The Duc de Chartres was a pretender; he might become a rival, and his presence in Spain was undesirable and even dangerous.[1]

Monsieur deeply resented his brother's preference for his bastards; they were invested with the highest dignities, while his own gifted son was condemned to idleness and wasted his life and ruined his health by follies and dissipations because he had nothing to do. In a fit of uncontrollable temper, Monsieur now told all this to the King and in his excitement he went so far as to say that the marriage into which his son had been forced was a shame and a disgrace. The King having then complained of his daughter's neglect by

[1] Seilhac, *L'Abbé Dubois*, &c., i. pp. 80–81; Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, i. pp. 44–47; D'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne*, &c., iii. pp. 3–25; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 383, 386, 415, 422.

her husband, Monsieur angrily retorted that he could not and would not interfere.[1]

Soon after this stormy interview, which had not passed unnoticed, Monsieur went to Saint-Cloud, there to spend the summer. His wife had no illusions about him; she frankly accused him of corrupting his own son, whom she called "a beast, though very clever and manly,"[2] but she was no less angry with the King, and showered abuse on Madame de Maintenon, "la vieille guenippe," "the old demon," "the Pantecrotte," although she knew that Torcy opened the letters containing these amenities.[2]

The King had avoided an open rupture, but had seen little of Monsieur, when he suddenly died of apoplexy, without having recovered consciousness. The wretched man's sudden end terrified Madame de Maintenon, whose conscience he had revolted by his sacrilegious practices.[3] It affected the King deeply; he had always been fond of his brother and on the best terms with him; now his grief was not free from remorse when he remembered their last parting at Versailles. He hastened to Saint-Cloud, behaved with fatherly tenderness towards his nephew, who was now Duc d'Orléans, and before he went away he comforted his sister-in-law, who was beside herself and in a fainting condition. Their marriage settlement left Monsieur's widow the choice between a country residence at Montargis, which meant exile, and retreat in a convent, which was still more hateful to her. She filled the air with lamentations, threw herself into her carriage, and reappeared at Versailles. To her infinite relief her son brought a message informing her that this was the auspicious moment for

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, viii. pp. 264 ff., 314; Dangeau, *Journal*, viii. p. 87.

[2] *Briefe*, &c., bei Ranke, v. pp. 351, 376, 385, 386, 388.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 276, 315.

ELISABETH CHARLOTTE, DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS

her to get reconciled to the King. The message came from Madame de Maintenon, and the Princess suddenly remembered that the Electress Sophia had always advised her to be on good terms with the Marquise. Would she come and see her, now that her health prevented her leaving her rooms? Madame de Maintenon came, but she made it a condition that a great friend of hers, Elisabeth Charlotte's lady-in-waiting, the Duchesse de Ventadour, should also be present at the interview, which proved full of surprises. First of all, Madame de Maintenon's birth was too low to allow of her being seated in the presence of so illustrious a Princess. However, it was equally impossible under the circumstances to let her stand, and Madame condescended to offer a chair. "I told her immediately," she reported to Hanover, "how *contente* I was with her, and I asked for her friendship. I also confessed that I had been dissatisfied with her, because I thought that she hated me and wanted to estrange the King from me—Madame la Dauphine having told me so. Then I said that I would forget everything, if only she consented to be my friend. Upon which she promised it; she spoke most beautifully and eloquently, and we kissed each other."[1] Unluckily for Madame, things were more complicated, and moreover they leaked out. Saint-Simon has recorded that part of the dialogue which she deemed it advisable to suppress. Madame de Maintenon had a message to deliver from the King: their common loss blotted out the past, provided Madame's behaviour should prove more satisfactory. She protested; it was true that she had complained on behalf of her son, but never, never had she said one single word which might have displeased or hurt anybody! At this juncture the Marquise produced out of her

[1] Helmolt, *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, &c., i. pp. 209–211, 213–215, 217, 219, 222–223, 228–229.

pocket a letter addressed to the Electress of Hanover and asked Madame if she knew the handwriting. The letter contained the most insulting remarks on the King's supposed marriage with his concubine, and on the impending ruin of France. Madame was thunderstruck. When she recovered the use of her tongue she broke out in apologies, promises and supplications, she sobbed and screamed, was finally pardoned by Madame de Maintenon and sent to the King, to whom she said: "If I hadn't loved you as I did, I should not have hated Madame de Maintenon so much."

He smilingly accepted the explanation, and gave "prodigiously" to her and to her son. The nightmare of a convent vanished, she remained at Versailles, and got a yearly pension of two hundred and fifty thousand livres, which was increased soon after on her complaining that it was insufficient to meet the obligations of her rank.[1]

Madame de Maintenon at this time received the most exuberant letters: Madame owed everything to her invaluable advice, she intended to rely upon it in future, and her gratitude could only end with her life.[2] Would the Marquise come and see her again? There seems to have been another hitch about ceremonial, for Madame de Maintenon found it necessary to send to Madame de Ventadour the dignified reply: "I beg of you to prevent Madame from troubling herself any further about the way in which I am to be received by her. To my mind, liberty is the greatest mark of kindness I can expect from her; I shall take it as such if she sends for me rarely and talks of indifferent things. . . . You deserve admiration for keeping aloof in the midst of an atmosphere as

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, viii. pp. 314–365, notes; Dangeau, *Journal*, viii. p. 123 ff.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 436, 438, 457.

stormy as this Court."[1] It was indeed wise of her not to believe in Madame's protestations; she soon forgot the service she had received, and never forgave the humiliation she had suffered. Henceforth her hatred against Madame de Maintenon amounted to monomania.

Meanwhile the aspect of European politics had completely changed. Louis XIV. had committed the faults which William III. had foreseen.

On the 1st of February 1701 the French *Parlement* registered a royal edict which maintained the right of Philip and his descendants to succeed to the throne of France. Nothing was said about the two crowns ever being united, but the very silence about that all-important question excited the gravest suspicions.

Philip's sovereignty over the Spanish Netherlands threatened the security of Holland, whose troops still occupied the barrier fortresses. As early as November 1700 Louis XIV. offered French help to his grandson should the Dutch refuse to evacuate them. In February 1701 he occupied the places himself, gave them back when Philip was acknowledged at the Hague, but left an armed force in Belgium. In August he obtained for French traders the enormously lucrative *asiento*, or monopoly in negro slaves, and soon after he prohibited English imports. These measures, if carried out, would have been a deathblow to the commerce of England. The French King's provocations gave William what he wanted—the support of public opinion. The nation, whose interests had not been touched by the Partition Treaty, and which had consented to the change of dynasty in Spain, now rose in defence of its commercial existence.

William seized his opportunity, and committed the

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 439.

country to war. On September 7 he signed the treaty of the Hague with Austria and Holland. Spain was not mentioned, but the policy which had dictated the Partition Treaty was revived. Austria was to have the Italian dominions, which were the chief object of the Emperor's ambition. The Maritime Powers asserted their right to commercial privileges in Spain; they extended them to America, and excluded France from transatlantic markets. Louis XIV. was once more confronted by the Grand Alliance. Months before, Parliament had passed the Act of Succession. One person at the French Court was glad of it. Elisabeth Charlotte, great-grand-daughter of Charles I., congratulated herself that, "having become a Catholic, she was no obstacle to the crown," which went to her aunt, the Electress Sophia. With loyal enthusiasm she praised her "as the one person in the whole world who was most worthy to wear it."[1]

If Torcy opened her letter, as he probably did, these words must have strangely impressed him at the very moment when he was outwitted by another lady, Madame de Maintenon.

James II. lay in a dying condition at Saint-Germain. She went there constantly, trying to comfort the desolate Queen, who thanked her "for the marvels" she did for her,[2] and whom she sincerely loved. On September 11 Louis XIV. also went to see the royal family, and was implored by the Queen to uphold the rights of her son.[3] He spoke very kindly to her, but did not bind himself further than by the promise to consult his Council of State on the question

[1] Helmolt, *Briefe der Herzogin von Orléans*, &c., i. April, Sept., Oct. 1701.

[2] Lettre de la reine d'Angleterre à Madame de Beauvais, supérieure du couvent de Chaillot; Saint-Simon, ix. App. xvi. p. 438.

[3] Saint-Simon, ix. App. xv. p. 433; Relation du Père Léonard (à la Trappe).

if the Prince of Wales's title to the crown should be acknowledged in case of his father's death.

On September 12 he held the council. Beauvillier rejected the proposal "for the people's sake"; Torcy opposed it for reasons of State; the ministers were unanimous, and the King adopted their views. Next day, September 13, James grew worse and the King started again for Saint-Germain. Before he entered his carriage Torcy came up to him and murmured in his ear that he was afraid of the effect upon him of pity and emotion. Louis stiffly replied that he had made up his mind and would acknowledge the Prince of Wales.[1] Historians, poets, and painters vie with each other in their endeavours to do justice to the pathos of the dying Stuart's death-bed.

In presence of the Nuncio, of the royal family, and of his faithful servants, his agony was comforted by the solemn declaration of Louis XIV. that he would do for his son what he had done for him, and joyful homage was paid to James III. On September 16 James II. died. Torcy would not say in his Memoirs that Louis XIV. had given way "to the importunities of two women." But he told what he knew to Voltaire.[2]

"The Queen of England," so says Saint-Simon, "won over Madame de Maintenon by appealing to her pity. . . . The King acted generously, not wisely."[3] The Court applauded; the Duc de Bourgogne expressed boundless satisfaction to his brother Philip, who, in his turn, wrote to Madame de Maintenon that he would never abandon James III.[4] He and the Pope acknowledged his title. There were

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ix. p. 289, note 7, fixe les dates.

[2] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xvii.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ix. p. 287; *Parallèle de trois Rois*, &c., i. p. 269 ff., Ecrits inédits.

[4] Louville, *Mémoires secrets*, i. p. 198; Lettre de Philippe à Madame de Maintenon, 4 Nov. 1701; Saint-Simon, ix. App. xv. p. 435.

people in France who hoped against hope that his fortunes might yet be redeemed. The last years of James II. had been dignified and even edifying. His former misconduct and his political failings were forgotten or ignored in France. Nobody doubted the sincerity of the change in which he was fortified by his intercourse with the most austere man in France, the illustrious Rancé at La Trappe, which led to a life of penance and mortification. Louis XIV., Saint-Simon, Madame de Maintenon, the Queen, and many others, spoke of the sanctity of James. Objects which had belonged to him were distributed by his widow and treasured like relics.[1] Various people, and a bishop amongst them, pretended to have been cured by his intercession.[2] One of his devotees was the Abbesse de Maubuisson, who confided to her niece that she expected nothing short of a miracle in favour of the Stuart cause. But Elisabeth Charlotte was a world-wise sceptic, who would not believe "in such miracles." "When I saw what our King did for the Prince of Wales," she wrote to the Electress Sophia, "I immediately thought that it would do more harm than good to this young King, and that King William would profit by it."[3]

From February 1701 Louis XIV. knew that William's health was failing. At that date Madame de Maintenon, who called him to the last "the Prince of Orange," spoke of his approaching end as of a deliverance.[4] Her feelings reacted upon those of the King. She, the one woman in France who would gladly have given up her life for the preservation of peace, threw her heart into the balance of war. The reckless audacity of the King's challenges to England

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 446, 454–456, 459–460.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv. p. 296.
[3] *Briefe*, &c., bei Ranke, v. p. 389.
[4] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 385.

are partly explained by the fact that he still thought peace possible after his greatest adversary's disappearance from the stage. Moreover the treaty of the Hague had already been signed seven days, when he acknowledged James III. There was no reason to concede to William, now that he was again his declared enemy, what he had refused him at Ryswyck, where he had become his friend. Torcy had to explain to William's ambassador that France kept to her stipulations and that nothing was changed by the acknowledgment of a title which belonged by right of birth to James. The two diplomatists did not meet again. Patriotic indignation in England rose in defiance against the attempt to interfere with the nation's right to regulate the succession and hand it over to the Protestant line. William now dissolved the Parliament which had been hostile to his policy, and a majority was returned which unconditionally supported it. When he died on March 19, 1702, the course of the new reign was determined. On the 15th of May, Queen Anne, the Emperor and Holland declared war on France.

Louis XIV. had other disillusions. At the head of the armies William was succeeded by Marlborough, a commander whose genius for war was greater than his own, and to whose diplomatic skill the success of the negotiations at the Hague was chiefly due. Eugene of Savoy, who had been lost to France when Louis XIV. preferred the Duc du Maine to him, now stood at the head of the Emperor's forces on the Po and was soon destined to lead them to victory.

As yet, the armies which confronted each other on the battlefields of Europe were not unequally matched. The strategical situation was greatly in favour of Louis XIV.; among his generals he numbered Catinat, Villars, Boufflers, Berwick and Vendôme; he had military possession of the Spanish Netherlands; the

resources of transatlantic Spain were at his command, and his grandson, who was expected in Italy, was most anxious to measure himself against his foes. But he was too young and too inexperienced to reign, and Louis XIV., who had made himself solely responsible for the government of France, for her diplomacy, finances, and armies, had also to govern Spain. He tried to do so with the aid of French statesmen and administrators at Madrid. Couriers went constantly to and fro between Madrid and Versailles; five hundred and thirty-eight private letters written by Louis XIV. to Philip are extant and supplement the contents of State papers and dispatches. Yet the task proved impossible. The French party, with Cardinal Porto-Carrero at its head, did not combine for a distinct purpose, and when Louville, the head of Philip's household, came back to Versailles, his report on the political situation in Spain was disheartening. Still worse was his private opinion about his young master. He thought him an indolent mediocrity, who did not govern, and would never be able to do so.[1] The question as to who would govern him was solved by his marriage.

Victor Amadeo, Duke of Savoy, had not changed his tactics of balancing dangerous neighbours against each other. He was strongly suspected of supplying his cousin Eugene with information about the movements of the French army. As had been the case ten years before, he had to be paid and kept in hand. In September 1701, his second daughter, Marie Louise, a young girl of thirteen, became, by solemn contract, the consort of Philip of Spain. He was overjoyed at getting married, and left Madrid to meet her at the frontier. Madame de Maintenon was deeply interested in his happiness, which she

[1] Louville, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 126, 137, 175, Lettre à Torcy, Août 1701; Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, i. pp. 72–74.

had done her best to secure.[1] What she heard of the young Queen, who was her beloved Duchesse de Bourgogne's sister, was so favourable that it sounded like flattery. It happened to be the truth. "She seems intelligent enough to frighten the Spaniards," Madame de Maintenon wrote confidentially to a friend.[2] Moreover, she had indomitable energy, and showed courage amounting to heroism. But as yet she was a mere child and had to be educated. "The Minerva is found," wrote Elisabeth Charlotte. Madame de Maintenon had not discovered her, but approved of her, and Philip received this characteristic letter: "I hope your Majesty will be happy with a Queen who is so highly gifted. The Princesse des Ursins is the proper person to help you in moulding the Queen's character. Your Majesty must not let her do as she likes; in that way the King in his kindness did harm to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who nearly died a short time ago, because she ate too much and hardly slept. I remember your telling me one day that young people ought to be restrained. The time has come to put your maxim into practice."[3] She honestly believed that the royal pair's future was safe under the care of a motherly friend, whose tact and experience would make her acceptable in the delicate part of a governess. Madame de Maintenon's object was to educate kings. Her ally was a Prime Minister in petticoats, who went and ruled over them.

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 350, 379, 443.
[2] Ibid., p. 461.
[3] Ibid., p. 445.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRINCESSE DES URSINS

ANNE MARIE DE LA TRÉMOILLE was predestined for politics. Her first impressions in life led back to the troubles of the Fronde, in which her father, the Duc de Noirmoutier, took a prominent part on the King's side. The exact date of her birth is unknown. In 1659 she married a Talleyrand, the Prince de Chalais. In those days Madame Scarron met her at the Hôtel d'Albret. "Do you remember," she wrote more than fifty years later, "how you envied me in your early youth, when serious people took me into a corner to talk about their affairs? I was sorry for it, and I would have much preferred to chat and to laugh with Mademoiselle de Pons and Mademoiselle Martel, who, within my hearing, amused themselves to their heart's content. The years have not altered my taste. I love society, and I cannot enjoy it any more; it does not exist for those who have to act a part."[1] The two ladies soon lost sight of each other. Chalais fought a famous duel with Beauvillier's elder brother, killed him and fled to Spain, where he and his wife spent six years.[2] She

[1] Madame de Maintenon et Madame des Ursins, *Lettres*, ed. Bossange, avril 1713.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites de la Princesse des Ursins.* Ersch u. Gruber, *Encyclopädie*, Thl. vi. p. 84; Stramberg, *Die Fürstin Orsini;* Mabillon et Monfaucon, *Correspondance*, &c., 144-146; Cosnac, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 453; Abbé Millot, *Mémoires du Maréchal de Noailles*, ii. pp. 367-397; Rousset, *Histoire secrète de la Cour de Madrid*, 1719; Combes, *La Princesse des Ursins;* L. v. Noorden, *Europäische Geschichte im XVIII. Jahrhundert*, i.; Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, i.; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, v. p. 109 ff.; App. vi. p. 497; ix. p. 92 ff.; App. ix. p. 379 ff.

acquired a perfect knowledge of the language, observed men and things, and did not deplore an exile which she shared with a husband whom she loved. In 1669 they left for Italy. Madame de Chalais was at Rome, where her husband was to join her, when he died at Venice in 1670, leaving her childless and in straitened circumstances. For a short time she hid her grief in a convent situated in the neighbourhood of the French Embassy. Soon afterwards tales were told about her intimate relations with two Cardinals. One was d'Estrées, brother of the French ambassador, the other Porto-Carrero, Archbishop of Toledo. When he first went to Rome in 1675, Madame de Chalais had just been married to the Duke of Bracciano. He was a widower, and, as the head of the Orsini family the first layman in rank at the Papal Court. D'Estrées had negotiated the marriage in order to win over Bracciano from the Spanish to the French party. Louis XIV. promised to reward his allegiance, and granted him a pension. Bracciano, however, was so heavily in debt that he could not provide for his wife's expenses. Their union was childless and proved unhappy, but the palace on the Piazza Navona became the centre of a brilliant society, which congregated round the beautiful and charming Duchess, and among whom politics were not excluded. In 1687 pecuniary difficulties and lawsuits with her brother induced her to leave for Paris, where she spent about eight years and was very popular. She went rarely to Court and was not encouraged to do so. Yet her name became associated with the negotiations which led to the marriage of the Duc de Chartres. Elisabeth Charlotte, when she heard of them, jumped at the conclusion that "Madame de Braquiane" wanted to be her daughter-in-law's lady-in-waiting. The position would have been beneath

her; it seems to have been offered, but was refused.[1] On that occasion Madame de Maintenon took her part, but saw little of her, and she went back to her husband some time before he died in 1698. Attempts to get on at Versailles had signally failed; a new departure, as the French King's political agent in Rome, met with brilliant success. "Madame des Ursins," as she now was called, corresponded regularly with Torcy and kept him informed about what was going on at Naples, Florence, Rome and Turin, where she was on intimate terms with the Duke of Savoy's French mother and with his wife. It helped her not a little that she was on the very worst terms with the French ambassador, Cardinal de Bouillon.[2] He had first ignored and afterwards offended her on questions of etiquette; he was the ally of the Jesuits, who had a standing quarrel about money with the house of Bracciano; he neglected the interests of France, because he expected princely honours for his house from the Emperor; and last but not least, he acted against his instructions and intrigued for Fénelon against Bossuet in the diplomatic warfare about Quietism.

In January 1697 the Cardinal de Bouillon had started as ambassador; in 1698 he was recalled in disgrace, and his successor took care to alight at the Palazzo Bracciano and to act in close touch with Madame des Ursins. Her diplomacy had triumphed and secured for France the most important man in Spain, her friend Cardinal Porto-Carrero. The secret negotiations which paved the way to the Spanish throne for a Bourbon were in masterly hands. Madame des Ursins was the confidant of Innocent XII. as well as of the King of France. The French

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iii. p. 216, janvier 1692; A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites de la Princesse des Ursins*, pp. 25, 29, 30, 32–33, 450.

[2] La Trémoille, *Madame des Ursins: Fragments de Correspondance*, i. p. 55.

sympathies of Cardinal Albani were perfectly known to her; yet she was by no means sure that Louis XIV. had acted wisely when he supported his candidature to the papal throne. In an admirable sketch of Clement XI.'s character she praised his virtues, but gave a warning against his want of energy, his inexperience and his leaning towards the Jesuits, and, moreover, considered it dangerous that he was relatively young.[1] A pontiff who was only fifty-one years old was likely to last long! She was right; the twenty-one years of his pontificate brought many conflicts, to her among others.

Her private affairs were at the lowest ebb when her star rose at Versailles. Her trusted friend was Madame de Noailles, the Marshal's wife, and mother-in-law to Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. To Madame de Noailles she wrote asking her not to forget the years which she numbered; she was then over sixty, and her chief income was the small pension granted by Louis XIV.[2] She did not neglect to send messages to Madame de Maintenon, whom she congratulated on the wisdom of her action against Fénelon. "It has secured the victory of truth," she wrote with adroit flattery. Torcy was reminded to let the King know that she was "the only really important person in Rome." An adversary of France had to be won over; Madame des Ursins shared her bedroom with him and he hesitated no longer. After the acceptance of the succession, she wrote to Louis XIV. personally; "his moderation," she said, "had raised him above all that men could imagine."[3] A few days later she informed Madame de Noailles that she had convinced the whole Spanish faction of the desirability of Philip's

[1] Duc de la Trémoille, *Madame des Ursins: Fragments de Correspondance*, i. pp. 40, 41–44, 66.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites de la Princesse des Ursins*, i. pp. 72, 75, 77, 81–83, 451.

[3] La Trémoille, *Madame des Ursins*, i. p. 55.

marriage with the Princess of Savoy rather than with an Austrian archduchess, which was the other alternative. She then pleaded her own cause. She was a Spanish grandee, the Spaniards liked and esteemed her, "she could make sunshine and rain at Madrid." There she would stay as long as it pleased the King of France, if he agreed to let her accompany the future Queen. Madame de Noailles "had a dozen daughters"; there were husbands for them in Spain.[1] Four months later the marriage with the Princess of Savoy was settled, Madame de Maintenon had been won over to Madame des Ursins and wrote to D'Harcourt: "It is always welcome to me to transact business for ladies, therefore I propose that Madame de Bracciano should accompany the Princess of Savoy. She is intelligent, sweet-tempered, has excellent manners, a great knowledge of the European world, and has always presided over society. She has no husband, no children, no embarrassing pretensions. I speak from no personal motive whatever, merely because I think her more likely to suit you than any of our ladies here."[2] Louis XIV. raised no objections, but left it for his grandson to decide. Porto-Carrero now proved Madame des Ursins' faithful friend; a stranger, he said, was the very person required; cabals and intrigues would make Castilian ladies impossible. The Court at Turin agreed too, and in June Philip V. gave his consent. When the question was asked at Madrid if she was to be Camarera-mayor, Louis XIV. answered in the affirmative. Madame des Ursins counted upon nothing less; she surrounded herself at Rome with a retinue of ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting, pages and servants innumerable, and drove about in a gilt carriage drawn by six horses: "I am poor (*gueuse*)," she wrote to Madame de Noailles, "but

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites*, &c., i. pp. 80–88.
[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 423.

CALIFORNIA

PRINCESSE DES URSINS

more proud than poor." She now considered it her duty to spend the King's money freely, but she never hoarded for herself, and laughed accusers to scorn who tried later on to suspect her integrity. She pushed it so far that she did not even ask for the arrears of her appointments.[1]

Saint-Simon, who knew her well, gives a description of her as she was at the time when her public career began. She was rather tall, had blue eyes and brown hair, a majestic figure, a very attractive face, and a delightful, singularly eloquent way of expressing herself. Her manner was always polite, even-tempered, obliging, and courteous to high and low. She had read and reflected much and was known to be a faithful friend and an implacable enemy.[2] Gallantry had played a conspicuous part in her life and the belief in the undiminished power of her personal attractions survived in old age. In her train was a Frenchman, her equerry d'Aubigny, whose behaviour left no doubt as to the nature of his relations to her. Louville calls him "a brute"; others speak of him as a clever, handsome man. One day, believing himself to be alone with her, he made use of expressions which were so coarse that those who were present could not conceal their embarrassment; Madame des Ursins alone did not show the slightest emotion. She always opened the dispatches which went to Versailles and read them before they were posted. In one of them she found perfidious allusions about herself and d'Aubigny, with the notice that they were secretly married: "Pour mariés, non," she put on the margin, and sent on the dispatch.[3] D'Aubigny never lost her friendship, and negotiated important affairs for her,

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, &c., iv. Amelot à Torcy, 7 janvier 1709.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, v. pp. 401–440, 492–493; xiv. pp. 262–264, 274, 275 ff.

[3] Ibid., xii. App. p. 478.

even at Versailles, where his services were rewarded. Of the Spaniards she had the worst possible opinion; she compared herself to Don Quixote and was prepared to fight them; nothing would frighten her, she said, as long as Louis XIV. trusted her—and nothing ever did. She relied on her consummate skill in the handling of men; at Rome she had schooled herself in intrigue and adopted the policy that the end justifies the means. Religious convictions she had none. Her ambition was of the highest order; she played the game the prize of which was Spain, with all the patient female arts of flattery, seduction and insinuation, and conquered by her charm the hearts of those she had resolved to rule.

Her epic career had humble beginnings; an alcove quarrel was the first difficulty she had to overcome. She had joined the young Queen at Villefranche, where they embarked for Barcelona. The passage was stormy; they were eaten up by bugs and so seasick and miserable that they went on shore, first at Antibes, then at Toulon, where they waited for permission to proceed by land. It took them over six weeks to reach the little frontier town of Figueras, where the King met his bride on November 3, 1701. The marriage ceremony having been celebrated at Turin, the local bishop merely gave his blessing to the royal pair and soon afterwards supper was served. It was composed of Spanish and French dishes, a concession so deeply resented by the Spaniards that they contrived to suppress the French supper by throwing the plates on the floor. The little Queen thereupon would not touch the Spanish delicacies. Her Piémontese attendants had been sent home at the frontier; her nerves were unstrung by the emotion of parting with them; she felt dead tired, lonely and unhappy, and bursting into tears she asked to be taken back at once to Turin, and would not go to bed. Part of the night

was spent in useless remonstrances and supplications. Finally, Madame des Ursins had to inform the King that his wife refused to see him; she then advised him strongly not to tolerate "such artifices," and for the next twenty-four hours the Queen saw nothing of her husband. Thanks to these tactics, she changed her own. A few days later Philip wrote to Versailles that their union was perfect. He was in love with his wife, and liked Madame des Ursins from the first. "You told me to govern him," she wrote to Torcy; "I think I shall succeed in doing so, although the Queen allows me but rarely to speak with him in private." She proved much more difficult to manage than her timid, indolent husband. "She is very intelligent, and more cunning than you think," was the first impression of Madame des Ursins about her; "she must be humoured, and at the same time we must prevent her gaining a hold over the King's mind." The problem was solved by the Queen's growing fondness for Madame des Ursins, which soon took the shape of a passionate attachment, rewarded by limitless devotion. In a letter to Madame de Noailles, the contents of which were intended for Madame de Maintenon, Madame des Ursins gives an amusing account of what her duties were during the voyage from Figueras to Barcelona: "Good heavens! are you aware of the nature of the office you gave me? Peace I have none, nor a minute's time to speak with my secretary, or to eat if I am hungry. I consider myself happy indeed if I manage to gulp down a vile repast without being summoned away as soon as I sit down and begin to eat. Madame de Maintenon could not help laughing if she knew what happens to me. I am the person who has the honour of handing his nightdress to the King of Spain and of keeping the said garment and a pair of slippers in readiness when he gets up. This might be borne patiently enough.

But isn't it too grotesque that every evening, when the King goes to the Queen, the Lord Chamberlain presents me with his sword, a night-pot, and a lamp, the contents of which I usually pour over my dress. He never gets out of bed without my first drawing the curtains back for him. It would be considered nothing short of a sacrilege if any other person but myself ventured to enter their Majesties' bedroom. The other day the lamp went out because I spilt the oil. We had arrived at night in this locality; I was unable to find the window and afraid of flattening my nose against a wall. For a quarter of an hour the King and myself knocked against each other while endeavouring to get at the window, which we finally succeeded in doing. His predilection for me is such that he is kind enough sometimes to send for me two hours before I should like to get up. The Queen finds these jokes delightful, but I do not as yet enjoy the confidence which she gave to her Piémontese women. This astonishes me, because I serve her much better, and I am sure that they neither washed her feet nor put on her stockings and shoes as neatly as I do."

To Madame de Maintenon she wrote but rarely; "she wanted to save trouble" and it was obvious that she preferred to transact State affairs with men. She had too many irons in the fire, and her first attempts to carry on her policy with Madame de Maintenon's help had been discouraged by that lady's prudent reserve. Yet they both wanted each other; having allied themselves in defence of a common cause, they learnt to like each other sincerely, and were both loyal in their friendship, which for years stood many tests. It did not exclude differences of opinion. The position of Madame des Ursins at the Spanish Court was still insecure when she first interfered in matters of State.

Philip V. disliked Madrid. He was hampered

by Court etiquette. Party strife ran so high that Louis XIV. feared poison for his grandson, and Porto-Carrero's administration utterly failed. He tried to govern exclusively with Frenchmen and Castilians; his avarice was notorious; he enriched himself while the people were starving and royal officials went begging in the streets of Madrid, where sixty thousand armed men lived at the expense of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Justice was not administered; reforms were discussed and not carried out; the Inquisition alone was powerful.

Philip had declined to witness the *auto-da-fé* of three wretched Jews, remarking that kings of his house were accustomed to pardon, not to burn, culprits. Porto-Carrero was helpless and wanted Louis XIV. to come in person and save Spain. This being out of the question, the French King sent Orry, a man of doubtful character but extraordinary ability, who knew Spain, and to whom he gave full powers to try and put order into the chaos of Spanish finances.[1]

Under these distressing circumstances, Philip stayed at Barcelona, from where he intended to embark for his kingdom of Naples and then to march with the Duke of Savoy against the Emperor. He had no troops, no money, no ships, and Fénelon compared Spain to "a corpse unable to defend itself." The expedition had to be equipped and paid for by Louis XIV. When asked for his consent he hesitated. Porto-Carrero, D'Harcourt, Chamillart, Beauvillier and Madame de Maintenon opposed the expedition; Louville, the French ambassador, Marcin, and Madame des Ursins advocated it. The Princess had come to understand Philip, his narrow-minded piety, his hopeless apathy and the melancholy disposition inherited from his Bavarian mother. Yet he had a redeeming point;

[1] Abbé Millot, *Mémoires polit. et milit. de Noailles*, ii. pp. 23 ff., 61–70, 86, 121; Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, &c., i. pp. 66–73.

he was brave; he passionately wanted to fight, and she thought it dangerous to reduce him to despair by keeping him inactive. She carried the day, and in April 1702 Philip left for Italy.[1] Under another name the Queen was practically Regent, but Madame des Ursins was not yet officially nominated Camarera-mayor. The title was granted when they arrived at Madrid in May, and her reign began.

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x. pp. 23–33, 34–39, notes, 151, notes; ix. App. ix. p. 396.

CHAPTER XIV

MADAME DES URSINS IN SPAIN — MARLBOROUGH IN FLANDERS — VILLARS — BLENHEIM — RECALL AND TRIUMPH OF MADAME DES URSINS, 1702–1705

PHILIP V. stayed at Naples till June. The enthusiasm with which he had been received had soon been followed by the revelation of a conspiracy against his life; the administration of the kingdom by the Spaniards was in hopeless confusion, and the moral effect of these experiences on the King's mind foreshadowed the mental troubles which afflicted him later in life. He could not bear the separation from his wife, missed the cheerful optimism of Madame des Ursins and only recovered from his depression when Louis XIV. sent a staff of officers and consented to give him the command of a strong division, with which he reinforced Vendôme.[1] This great-grandson of Henri IV., and Gabrielle d'Estrées, a very bad character and a great soldier, had replaced the noble-minded Catinat. His renown had suffered in Italy in consequence of the intrigues and mistakes of the King's old favourite, Villeroy, which led to the defeat of Chiari in 1701. Catinat was recalled; he did not deign to justify himself, and lived in retirement, when the King, who had resolved to send him on the Rhine, summoned him to Versailles and asked for explanations about the events that had taken place in Italy. Catinat affirmed that he had given all the

[1] Abbé Millot, *Mémoires de Noailles*, &c., pp. 111–116; Louville, *Mémoires*, p. 270 ff.

necessary information and hidden nothing and referred to his letters. Chamillart, who had them in his keeping, was summoned. He was much embarrassed, but when he heard what Catinat had to say, he made himself answerable for the perfect correctness of his statements. The King was very angry; Chamillart's suppressions, he said, had led him unjustly to accuse Catinat and now he wanted to know the truth.

His minister then confessed in great confusion that he had promised Madame de Maintenon not to show the King the contents of these letters, which would have deeply afflicted him. "Poor woman," exclaimed Louis XIV.[1] He reconciled Catinat with Chamillart and persuaded him to serve again.

In Northern Italy Eugene, although outnumbered by the French and severed from his base, maintained his position throughout the campaign. At Luzzara, on August 15, he inflicted a severe check on Vendôme and Philip of Spain, who thus saw his first battle and showed great valour. Louis XIV. congratulated him when he heard that he had exposed himself. He was quite willing that the Duc de Bourgogne should emulate his brother and not spare himself.[2] Bourgogne, no less anxious to fight, had asked Madame de Maintenon to plead with his grandfather for him[3] to be sent to the Netherlands with Marshal Boufflers. On his way to the seat of war, he met Fénelon at Cambrai after five years' separation but was not allowed to speak to him in private. Louis XIV. controlled his grandson's actions; he had no power over his feelings. The interview lasted only a few moments; they were sufficient to convince the Archbishop of the undiminished

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ix. App. vii.; x. pp. 119–124; *Parallèle*, &c., pp. 249–250; *Lettres de la duchesse d'Orléans*, Receuil Brunet, i. p. 295.

[2] Louville, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 313–314; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x. p. 223, note 3.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 383, 386.

fervour of his former pupil's devotion. Beauvillier had succeeded in making of Philip of Spain a pious Christian, a faithful husband and an honest man. Fénelon's ambition soared higher. He was forbidden to speak, but he wrote letters which Beauvillier handed on. "The kingdom of God," he told Bourgogne, "does not exact petty formalities and narrow practices; it requires the fulfilment of the duties attending everybody's station in life. . . . Those of hermits and simple folk are not yours. Saint Louis worked his salvation as a great king. The obligation to take part in worldly affairs and entertainments ought not to trouble you. I cannot come to an understanding with men who complain about everything. Nothing is unworthier of a sound, well-balanced mind than to choose in all things what is most painful to oneself." Would the warning be understood? Fénelon became more pressing; he looked upon the war as a terrible calamity; but this war, once begun, had to be carried on with relentless energy. Beauvillier acted on Fénelon's advice when he encouraged Philip to fight for his crown.

The Duc de Bourgogne's adversary was Marlborough, and his military reputation seemed to depend on the results of a decisive encounter with him. But as Boufflers, who was responsible for the operations, had to withdraw before Marlborough, the Allies captured Kaiserswerth, Venloo, Ruremonde and Liège; the campaign came to an inglorious end in October, and the Duc de Bourgogne returned to Versailles. He found the King under the joyful impression of a signal success. Catinat had been sent with an inferior force to Alsace, when, in June, the Allies crossed the Rhine and laid siege to Landau, which could not be saved and capitulated in September.

The Elector of Bavaria now openly declared for France, who promised sovereignties. He captured

Ulm, and thereby forced the Allies to recross the Rhine. Villars, who had been sent with reinforcements to Catinat, superseded him by forcing the passage at Hüningen and advancing into the Black Forest, he engaged and defeated the imperial army at Friedlingen on October 14, 1702. The news of this victory was carried to Versailles by the Comte d'Ayen, who had left Spain loaded with honours, but disliked by the King.[1] The choice of D'Ayen was a homage paid to Madame de Maintenon. She had known Villars' father, and seen much of himself in the days when she was Madame Scarron.[2] Very few of her letters to him have been recovered. Villars' biographer, De Vogüé, who published them, regrets the loss of this correspondence, which covered thirty years, and would do still more honour to "the perspicacity and the patriotism of Madame de Maintenon. The letters which exist," he says, "entitle her to the gratitude of France."[3] She tried to shield Villars against the consequences of his many failings, his avidity, vanity and extravagance. Her affection for him was sincere, and he could rely on her protection. "If people knew you as I do," she said to him one day, "they would be very fond of you." He constantly appealed to her in his many difficulties and disappointments; his restless ambition did not exhaust her patience and she let him speak freely to her. "What does it matter to the King if a man is wicked?" he wrote one day, thinking, perhaps, of the great charmer, Marlborough. "The qualities of the greatest general may belong to a cruel, avaricious, godless man. I should prefer the King to have a general who has all these pernicious faults to a fool supposed

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x. p. 152, note 6*a*, App. xii. p. 503.

[2] Marquis de Vogüé, *Villars d'après sa Correspondance*, &c., i. chap. v.

[3] Ibid., p. 288.

to be pious, honest, and liberal. Men are wanted for war, and I can assure you that men who deserve the name are very rare indeed."[1]

Madame de Maintenon did not always decline listening to such worldly wisdom. The cynic Vendôme, amongst others, must have been repulsive to her. Yet in courteous letters addressed to him in 1702, she frankly alludes to the main subject on which they differed, but calls him "the Saviour of Italy." Six years later she spoke differently, and said that Italy had been lost because of Vendôme, who paid court to Chamillart by putting his son-in-law, La Feuillade, at the head of the army which was defeated at Turin. Later on he dishonoured the Duc de Bourgogne. "We have all been deceived by this man," she wrote to Madame des Ursins.[2] She herself was charged with fatal interference in military matters, and made answerable for errors which led to disaster. It is obvious that she was misled by her sympathies much more than by her aversions. She hardly ever speaks of those she dislikes. What she thought of Louvois or of Madame is veiled under measured words. She once makes use of the expression, "un pantalon suisse," when speaking of the Cardinal de Bouillon, but such intemperate language is rare from her pen. Villeroy found her faithful when fortune deserted him. She admired Boufflers and protected Berwick, whose merit appealed all the more to her because of his Stuart blood. As a rule she pitied the vanquished, and was by no means the dupe Saint-Simon makes her out to be when she nursed Madame de Dangeau's only son in a severe illness for his mother's sake.[3] Her

[1] De Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., p. 258.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x., App. vii. pp. 489–490; xiii. pp. 280–297, 489–500, 564; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, 18 mars 1709.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv. pp. 92–94, note 3; A. Geffroy, *Correspondance générale*, ii. pp. viii.–ix., 187; à Noailles, 1710.

mistakes became crimes when fortune abandoned Louis XIV.

She had a reprieve in 1703, when the winter season interrupted hostilities. Eugene left Italy and went to Vienna, there to organise and direct the exertions of his Government and to plan the next campaign with Marlborough. Philip V. returned to Spain, and re-entered Madrid in January 1703. The reins of government remained practically in the hands of Madame des Ursins. She had kept her promise and trained the Queen. Marie Louise had grown into a young woman of majestic appearance and irresistible charm. Her kindness of heart and generous disposition endeared her to the Spaniards; her spirits ran high, while her self-possession and mental powers were those of a woman of thirty. She presided for long hours over the Junta and the days were gone when ministers heard but the one phrase, "It is well," from their sovereign.[1] She it was who encouraged her husband to bear their separation and to acquire military glory. Madame des Ursins had distinct orders from Versailles even to the minutest details and nothing was decided without her.[2] She attended the Council, with a piece of needlework in her hands, and everything she observed increased "her disdain for the people with whom she had to deal." After Philip's return, she wrote to Torcy that "her glorious ministry was at an end, and that she expected her recall." She knew herself to be necessary; the Queen adored her, the King had no will of his own, and she was more powerful than ever. She got rid of Porto-Carrero, whom she had come to despise, and who offered no resistance. Spaniards, who had procured the crown

[1] Millot, *Mémoires*, &c., ii. pp. 54, 112–113; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x. App. xvi. p. 528; the Queen to Philip, Sept. 1702.

[2] Millot, *Mémoires de Noailles*, p. 121; Baudrillart, *Philippe V.*, &c., i. pp. 130–131.

for Philip, found no mercy, and were forced to go. The Queen's ladies, who intrigued with the widow of Charles II., were all dismissed, to the sovereign's undisguised satisfaction. Then came the turn of two d'Estrées, a cardinal and an abbé, who followed each other as French ambassadors and tried to oppose the Princess; she got rid of them too.

When Louis XIV., who thought highly of their abilities, would not part with them, she threatened to retire, and he was obliged to give way. Louville, who hated her personally, sided with her enemies, and denounced her in his correspondence with Torcy and the Beauvilliers as a rebel and a traitor to France. He was forced to leave Spain, and Beauvillier declared that in future nothing would induce him to have anything to say on Spanish affairs.[1] Torcy wavered, and recommended prudence and moderation. Madame des Ursins governed with Orry, who was feared, detested and very capable. She would probably have succeeded in finding her way out of the internal turmoil, but was wrecked in the storms which assailed Spain from without.

An attack on Cadiz by the British fleet in the autumn of 1702 had failed. On his homeward voyage the British Admiral found the Plate fleet sheltering in Vigo; he attacked and destroyed it, with the French squadron which formed its escort. Madame des Ursins spoke of a disaster, and asked for French troops as the Spaniards were incapable of helping themselves.[2] The French fleet retired to Toulon;

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, &c., i. 1702–1703; Geffroy, *Lettres inédites de la Princesse des Ursins*, pp. 137, 164 ff.; Baudrillart, *Philippe V.*, &c., i. pp. 131–133 ff.; Louville, *Mémoires secrets*, &c., i. pp. 375–376; ii. pp. 66–69 ff.; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x. App. i. p. 437; xi. App. vii. p. 505 ff.; *Correspondance de Louville*, xi. App. vi. p. 489 ff.; *Lettres de la Princesse des Ursins*, xi. pp. 314, 320, 323–250, et notes; xii. pp. 57, 62–66.

[2] Princesse des Ursins to Torcy, Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, App. xix. pp. 533–535.

Portugal, deprived of French support, concluded the treaty of May 16, 1703, and passed over to the Grand Alliance. The Emperor now decided to transfer his rights over Spain to his second son, the Archduke Charles, and to despatch him to Portugal. In case of an attack, Louis XIV. could not abandon his grandson. "Spain will be loyal as long as France is prosperous and powerful," wrote Madame des Ursins; and, as yet, fortune went with France.

The campaigns of 1703 were glorious for her arms, although Marlborough had captured Bonn and cleared the country between the Meuse and the Rhine of the French. Villars had come to the front. He recrossed the Rhine and joined the Bavarian Elector, who captured Ratisbon. Vendôme pressed back the army of Italy through Tyrol; Hungary was in insurrection; the valley of the Danube stood open to the French and Vienna was in peril when Max Emanuel turned aside into Tyrol on the fatal expedition which ended in retreat. Villars' victory at Hoechstaedt closed the campaign, but his violent quarrels with the Elector induced Louis XIV. to recall him. In 1704 he was sent to Languedoc, where Protestant insurgents had for twenty years kept alive the civil war, the horrors of which were increased by the cruelties of men like Bâville. He was Madame de Maintenon's friend; she approved of his system of repression, and, adhering to her former tactics, she hid the gravity of the situation from the King.[1] However, the choice of Villars was most welcome to her. She agreed with him that firmness and clemency were needed to pacify the Cévennes, but she exacted the assurance that liberty of conscience should not be granted.[2]

A few weeks later she was absorbed by a calamity

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 74, 257; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xi. pp. 66, note 4, 80–84.

[2] De Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., i. pp. 269–285.

which had been long foreseen[1]—the defection of the Duke of Savoy. The Emperor's promises of territorial aggrandisement and other advantages triumphed easily enough over his parental affections and he went to war against two sons-in-law. Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon had to comfort the Duchesse de Bourgogne. She was as yet childless and feared in her distress that the King was going to send her back to Savoy. He tenderly told her that her father would learn to recognise his true interests; in the meantime nothing would alter his feelings for her.[2] The Duc de Bourgogne had fought on the Rhine and had been successful. In September he gave up his command rather suddenly to Marshal Tallard, and went back to Versailles. His heart was not at rest. To the wife whom he adored he sent letters, some of which were signed with his blood; he added verses in which he told his love like a romantic boy. She answered rarely. His feverish impatience to see her again became irresistible, and Tallard took Landau without him.

At Turin the poor Duchess of Savoy, who had to drink to the dregs the cup of conjugal disappointments, heard reports about her eldest daughter which made her very anxious. Like so many others, she carried her sorrow to Madame de Maintenon. The relations between the royal pair were not what they ought to be; she implored the Marquise to watch over her child's fair reputation.[3] Elisabeth Charlotte spoke more clearly. "The Duchesse de Bourgogne is exceedingly clever, but she behaves like all young girls who are free to do as they like. If people knew

[1] Vendôme à Louis XIV., commencement de 1702; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, x. p. 484; xi. pp. 221, note 4, 272.

[2] D'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne*, &c., ii. pp. 126–144, 443–444; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 85, 89, 106.

[3] Abbé Proyard, *Vie du Dauphin*, &c., ii. p. 169 ff.; D'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne*, &c., ii. pp. 133, 356, Turin, 4 févr. 1700.

how to manage her she would be all right. I greatly fear that they never will and that many little stories will come to light."[1]

"The little stories" had names of their own. Saint-Simon, a sincere admirer of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, admits that she flirted a good deal and was imprudent. Nangis, a brilliant young officer of twenty, was evidently not indifferent to her. He excited the jealous rage of Maulévrier, Tessé's son-in-law, who frightened the Princess by his passion for her, and they exchanged a few letters.

Tessé, a loyal servant of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, then sent him to Spain, where he behaved in the same extravagant way, and on his return committed suicide. Madame de Maintenon knew what was going on and, happily for the Princess, shielded her against herself; moreover, her popularity was so great that no evil reports were circulated about these events. Her husband never suspected that she had eyes for any other man but himself.[2] He was with her when their first child, a son, was born in June 1704. It was the only ray of sunshine in a sky darkened by terrible calamities.

At the end of 1703 the prospects of the Emperor looked bad indeed. In the spring of 1704 Savoy's defection secured Austria from attack on the side of Italy, but the valley of the Danube was still open to the French. Eugene now took the command of the Austrians. During the winter he had planned with Marlborough the great design of bringing the British and their auxiliaries to the Danube. The Dutch, whose contingent was by far the strongest in the

[1] *Briefe*, &c., bei Ranke, v. p. 386.

[2] D'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne*, &c.; Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 212–213; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii. pp. 269–279, 605; xiii. pp. 211, 216, 232, 324; xiv. pp. 324, 331; A. Geffroy, *Correspondance authentique*, pp. 325, 331, 341.

DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE

ield, refused to let Marlborough take their troops away from the Netherlands to the distant seat of war n South Germany. Marlborough, however, could rely upon the complicity of Heinsius, the leading man n the Councils at the Hague. Under pretext of a nove up the Moselle to turn the position of the French commander, Villeroy, he started on his famous march up the Rhine to the Danube, and on his way met Eugene. Villeroy, when he found that Marlborough had deceived him by the feint at the Moselle, reinforced Tallard in Alsace, but failed to take the offensive against Eugene, who marched to the Danube, while Tallard joined the French under Marcin and the Bavarians. The Allies attacked them on August 13 and defeated them completely at Blenheim. It was the greatest victory since 1643, when Condé's triumph at Rocroy had established the ascendency of France.

Germany was lost. The French retreated to the Rhine, the Elector was a fugitive, and the Austrians occupied Bavaria.

The news of the disaster reached Versailles but slowly. Louis XIV. bore the suspense with calm dignity. He did not flinch when he came to know the extent of his misfortune. Tallard, who had lost the battle, his only son and his liberty, was rewarded as if he had been victorious.[1] So was Villeroy: "I deplore the fact that we have but few men like you," wrote Madame de Maintenon. There was no time to mourn for the dead. The Archduke Charles had arrived at Lisbon with troops; the Duke of Berwick, the illegitimate son of James II. and Marlborough's sister, had to be sent to Spain with 12,000 Frenchmen. Philip V. left for the Portuguese frontier in March 1704, and the Princesse des Ursins received orders

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 29–30; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, v. pp. 257–259, 261–262, 265–266; A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites de la Princesse des Ursins*, pp. 134, 138, 169–176.

immediately to depart from Madrid and retire to Italy. "My honour and yours and the interests of the Monarchy are engaged," Louis XIV. wrote to his grandson.[1] For several months he had been determined to get rid of the Princess. He had lost control over affairs at Madrid, and Torcy had given her up. Orry had promised to provide for the army, but his efforts were baffled by the apathy and the incapacity of his officials; the arsenals were empty, the soldiers starving; the King had to borrow the money with which he left his capital; the system of Madame des Ursins had failed. When the blow fell, the Queen gave way to a rage bordering on despair. Couriers were despatched to Versailles, and the King was implored to leave the Princess in Spain. "Tell the Queen," proudly answered Louis XIV., "that neither cabals nor intrigues have influenced my determination. I act by myself. Nobody would dare to tell me a falsehood."[2] The Princess herself never lost heart for a moment and offered no resistance; yet, before she left Madrid, she chose the new Camarera-mayor, a harmless, kind lady, of whom she had nothing to fear. She then organised a service of secret agents with D'Aubigny at their head, who kept her informed about everything and received her orders. After a distressing scene of farewell with the Queen, who would not be comforted, she travelled slowly to Bayonne. There she found another order of Louis XIV., who relented so far as to make Toulouse the place of her exile. Her friends at Versailles had exerted themselves on her behalf, and it was thought unwise to drive the Queen to desperation. Madame de Maintenon wrote to her: "The bad relations between the ambassadors and Madame des Ursins

[1] Millot, *Mémoires de Noailles*, pp. 165–166; Dangeau, *Journal*, xv. p. 456 ff.

[2] Louis XIV., *Œuvres*, vi. pp. 155–156.

have done great harm and this state of things was impossible. I implore your Majesty not to believe that the ruin of the Princess is intended. The only charge against her is that she wanted to govern alone. Your Majesty's friendship for her is most praiseworthy. I refuse to interfere, and I have no authority whatever, but I hope that everything will be smoothed to your Majesty's satisfaction."[1] Madame de Noailles heard incessantly from Madame des Ursins: "I won't speak to you about Madame de Maintenon," she wrote; "I know she did nothing, either for or against me, as affairs of that sort are distasteful to her. But whether she wish it or no, God in His justice will make use of her to confound my enemies."[2] She remained at Toulouse till December 1704. There she heard of the capture of Gibraltar by the British fleet. The Comte de Toulouse then brought a French squadron from Brest to the assistance of the fleet from Toulon and tried to reconquer Gibraltar. On August 24 the only serious encounter of the main battle fleets during the war took place off Malaga. Toulouse made a gallant defence, in which Villette, Madame de Maintenon's cousin, greatly distinguished himself; but the action was not renewed and the French retired to Toulon. The Allies now controlled the Mediterranean, and their ships moved upon it "like swans on the lake of Chantilly." An attempt of the Franco-Spanish army to besiege Gibraltar proved ineffectual, and little was accomplished on land.

In September 1704 Berwick was recalled at the instance of the Queen, who did not like him. Marshal Tessé, formerly ambassador at Turin, and a special favourite of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, took his place. Madame de Maintenon thought Berwick's recall "a great folly,"[3] but with Tessé's arrival at

[1] A. Geffroy, *Correspondance authentique*, ii. p. 87.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii. p. 91, note 2.
[3] Ibid., xii. p. 225, note 2; p. 334, note 3.

Madrid, the fortunes of Madame des Ursins changed. He had paid her a visit on his way to Spain and come to the conclusion that she had not ceased to guide Philip V. and the Queen.[1] In November the Princess received permission to go to Versailles and justify herself. She went there determined to play the part of accuser, and had secured allies on whose support she could rely. The Duc d'Orléans owed it to her that Philip V. had acknowledged his right of succession,[2] and the Queen's stubborn resistance to the agents sent by Louis XIV. had convinced him, his statesmen and Madame de Maintenon that Spain could not be controlled without Madame des Ursins. On January 10, 1705, she arrived at Versailles; a few days later the King was completely under her charm. He conferred with her for hours, asked her to Marly, where royal honours were paid to her, and he, who could not bear dogs, caressed her lapdog and saw her daily, in close intimacy with Madame de Maintenon. When her return to Spain had been decided upon,[3] she treated Torcy with polite condescension, spoke to Chamillart in a tone of command, and chose her ministers. Orry, who had been dismissed soon after her departure from Madrid, returned with her. Alba, Philip's ambassador, took his orders from the Princess and was received by Madame de Maintenon, who never saw foreign Princes and diplomatists, but made an exception in his favour. The French ambassador, who had intrigued against the Princess at Madrid, was wise enough to retire, and in his place she chose Amelot, a most distinguished and amiable man, who pledged himself

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, v. p. 270 ff.; Rambuteau, *Mémoires de Tessé*, pp. 192–195, 205; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii., App. xi., Lettres Tessé, &c.

[2] Duc d'Orléans à la Princesse des Ursins, 23 juin 1703; Saint-Simon, App. vi. p. 500; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, v. pp. 279, 280–281; Millot, *Mémoires de Noailles*, p. 402.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii. pp. 392 ff., 431–448; Baudrillart, *Philip V. et la Cour de France*, i. pp. 189 ff., 200, 202, 203, 207.

to act in complete accordance with her. Her first interference in Spanish affairs had been in 1700, when she had tried to prevent the nomination of the Jesuit Daubenton as Philip's confessor, "to punish his Order for all the *friponneries* she had experienced from them." Madame de Maintenon at that time had refused her assistance in the matter. Daubenton was a most dangerous intriguer; Louis XIV. now recalled him, and the King of Spain was provided with another Jesuit.[2]

He and the Queen clamoured for Madame des Ursins; nevertheless she postponed her departure from one month to another. Bourgogne's little son died, "killed by the doctors," said Madame. The Emperor Leopold's death, in May, deprived Marlborough of the Austrian contingent; the States-General and his German allies did not perform their obligations, and he gave up the plan of invading France and transferred his army to the Netherlands, which became once more the seat of war. Villeroy, who was in command there, was repulsed, and thereby reduced Villars to the defensive in Alsace. Eugene's successful advance in Italy was checked by Vendôme at Cassano. No decisive military events marked the campaign of 1705; Versailles was quiet, Spain wanted Madame des Ursins, and still she would not go. She raised objections and had to be coaxed by the King's flatteries, by favours for herself and distinctions for her family, before she consented to assume once more the functions of Camarera-mayor. Madame de Maintenon could not understand what was going on.[3] Saint-Simon offers an explanation. Madame de Maintenon, he says, was very ill with fever, and the

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites Ursins*, pp. 80–88, 94; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, &c., i. pp. 55, 59; Louis XIV., *Œuvres*, vi. pp. 180–181; Rambuteau, *Mémoires de Tessé*, ii. p. 166.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, viii. p. 232.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, v. pp. 299, 345; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 58–59, 73, 89, 93.

Princess bethought herself of governing at Versailles; Louis XIV. was supposed to waver between two ladies, one of whom was seventy, the other not much younger.[1] They both knew what was in people's minds; the Marquise jestingly asked her friend if she really intended to poison her and to take her place, instead of patiently waiting for her end, which could not be far distant. Madame des Ursins answered in the same tone, but with a slight touch of apology and remarks about the wickedness of men. However, in July, she left for Madrid. Her experiences at Versailles had taught her that the one necessary link between Louis XIV. and herself was Madame de Maintenon: "I have contracted the habit of speaking to her as if she were my confessor," she said, "but the pleasure is infinitely greater."[2]

The Marquise henceforth became involved in a correspondence which fills volumes, and continued for nine years.[3] It was by no means limited to State affairs, which Madame des Ursins preferred to transact directly with the King and his ministers. Female curiosity led to Court gossip, which Madame de Maintenon for once did not neglect, for the sake of her friend. She was most at her ease when speaking of the concerns of the royal families, and took no less interest in the nursery at Madrid than in the political troubles of Madame des Ursins. Illnesses and events like the birth of the Spanish heir to the throne, in 1707, and later on of two other sons, and the confinements of the Duchesse de Bourgogne were discussed by both ladies and minutely described with an abundance of medical detail. The leading spirit in this intercourse,

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiii. pp. 16 ff., 18, note 1.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites Ursins*, p. 190.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Madame de Maintenon, Correspondance authentique*, vol. ii.; *Lettres inédites de Madame des Ursins;* La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, &c.; vol. vi., Lettres reproduites dans *Mémoires de Saint Simon*, Appendices et notes.

however, was Madame des Ursins, whose indomitable energy contrasted with her friend's growing despondency. The first news which reached Versailles told of her triumphant reception at Madrid and of the royal pair's exultation, which had to be kept within bounds. This second part of her reign belongs to European history at one of its most eventful and tragic periods.

CHAPTER XV

TURIN, 1706—RAMILLIES—BERWICK AND THE DUC D'ORLÉANS IN SPAIN—THE DUC DE BOURGOGNE IN FLANDERS, 1708—DISGRACE OF THE DUC D'ORLÉANS—THE GREAT WINTER OF 1709

In April 1706 Vendôme, who boasted that he was always successful except when confronted with Eugene, drove the Imperialists back into the Tyrol. His object was to take Turin. The siege of the town had been entrusted to La Feuillade in September 1705. With admirable disinterestedness, Vauban had offered to serve under him, but the offer was rejected.[1] Vendôme reassured Chamillart, when he thought his son-in-law too inexperienced and "trembled at the prospect of so important an enterprise being in the hands of so young a man."[2] The siege did not begin till May 1706. On May 23 Villeroy was defeated by Marlborough at Ramillies and within a fortnight of the battle, all Brabant and the greater part of Flanders were in the hands of the English General. The Court was in consternation; Louis XIV., insufficiently informed by Villeroy, sent Chamillart to Flanders. Madame de Maintenon complained to Madame des Ursins that the King's sorrow was increased by the knowledge that some of his troops had not done well and that disorder prevailed amongst them. "Villeroy is most unhappy," she added; "if he had not accepted the battle he would have been

[1] Esnault, *Chamillart*, ii. pp. 26, 34, 91–95, 99–104; G. Michel, *Histoire de Vauban*, pp. 356–363.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiii. p. 367, note 5.

CHAMILLART
From the painting at Versailles

dishonoured and equally blamed. Now Paris and the army are so furiously against him that I don't think the King will be able to save him." She also pitied Villeroy, while Madame des Ursins could not understand why the Marshal did not at once offer his resignation, which had become unavoidable.[1] The King accepted it, but in 1712 he employed him once more. Vendôme received orders to take Villeroy's command in Flanders, and the Duc d'Orléans was sent to Italy there to replace Vendôme. Madame de Maintenon had overcome the King's reluctance to nominate his nephew,[2] but he made him dependent on Marshal Marcin. La Feuillade's opposition to the Duke's tactical proposals induced him to decline all further responsibility, and to limit himself to his duty as a soldier. His foresight was justified by the event. In July, Eugene appeared in Italy, outflanked the French and effected his junction with the Duke of Savoy. They advanced on Turin and completely defeated the investing army after the bloody battle of September, in which Villette's son lay among the dead.

The victory was decisive. The French evacuated Piedmont, left the garrisons in the Milanese to their fate and withdrew to France. By the Convention of Milan, in March 1707, Louis XIV. abandoned Northern Italy and made the first overtures for peace, which were, however, rejected by the Allies.

The Duc d'Orléans had been severely wounded at the battle of Turin. One of his first communications was for Madame de Maintenon. He merely asked for justice; she exalted his heroic conduct and wrote to Madrid that, had his counsels prevailed, Italy would have been saved. In March 1707 she obtained

[1] A. Geffroy, *Correspondance authentique*, ii. pp. 100, 103; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv., App. p. 507.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiii. p. 392.

for him the command of the army in Spain.[1] There, too, the Franco-Spaniards had suffered defeat. In the summer of 1705 the Archduke Charles landed at Barcelona and was acknowledged in Catalonia, Murcia, and Valencia.[2] Tessé and Philip, supported by the Toulon squadron, which, however, was soon dispersed, attacked Barcelona, but were forced to raise the siege in May 1706 and to beat a disastrous retreat into France. In June the victorious Allies occupied Madrid. "I am annihilated, *frappée, abattue, stupide,*" exclaimed Madame de Maintenon; "it is unbearable to see the King suffer." But she would remember, she added, that hers was the blood of Agrippa d'Aubigné and try and recover her spirit.[3] The Queen of Spain, who was Regent, had not yet left Madrid when she answered: "Neither the Princess nor myself lose heart. I advise you to do the same, and beg of you to sustain the King and my sister. Despondency makes people ill and leads to nothing. For heaven's sake no fever, when you read this."[4] A few weeks later she and Madame des Ursins were fugitives at Burgos. They were entirely destitute, and were obliged to sell their jewels when she told "her dear Madame de Maintenon not to be so depressed, while they were in high spirits." To Amelot the Queen wrote in a playful tone that she and Madame des Ursins were going to ask for another ambassador, more prompt than he to deliver them from the martyrdom they suffered at Burgos: "The houses threaten to fall on our heads, we are eaten up by gnats and vermin, rats devour everything they can take hold of in our rooms. . . ."[5]

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv., App. ii. pp. 300, 500; Millot, *Mémoires de Noailles*, pp. 403–404.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres inédites*, pp. 206–208.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 86–89.

[4] P. Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, pp. 257–259, 266–272.

[5] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, ii. 11 juillet 1706.

Help was near. In 1706 Louis XIV. had sent Berwick back to Spain at the express demand of Madame des Ursins, who shortly before, however, would have preferred La Feuillade. Berwick and Amelot reorganised the Spanish army; Philip V., who had fought with Tessé under the walls of Barcelona, re-entered Spain through France and joined Berwick. Castile proved loyal to his cause, and in September the royal pair re-entered Madrid: "This event shows that, after God, it is to our subjects that we owe the crown," wrote Marie-Louise to Madame de Maintenon. When she heard that people suspected her of intrigues with the Court of Savoy she indignantly exclaimed: "What, do they think me capable of dethroning my husband and myself for my father's sake?" She was made of sterner stuff than her more tender-hearted and frivolous sister, who was equally accused of treasonable communications with the Court of Turin. Yet she was free from blame; she had merely implored her father to come to terms with France.[1]

In April 1707 Berwick marched against the Anglo-Portuguese, and defeated them at Almanza, thereby reducing them to the defensive in Catalonia. In October the Duc d'Orléans, who had not been able to reach Berwick's army before he gave battle, now took his revenge and besieged Lerida, which fell in November 1707. The year after, Tortosa was taken and Philip's hold on the Peninsula was not again threatened till 1710.

The Archduke was proclaimed in the Netherlands, where Vendôme adopted a cautious, defensive attitude against Marlborough, whose action was hampered by the Dutch deputies and whose forces were reduced by want of support from his north-German

[1] D'Haussonville, *La Duchesse de Bourgogne et l'Alliance savoyarde*, ii. p. 316 ff.

allies. Meanwhile, Villars profited by the inefficiency of his German antagonists, crossed the Rhine, captured in May the famous lines of Stolhofen and spread terror throughout south-western Germany. He levied such heavy contributions that he was able to send money to France. When the wife of the Prince of Baden humbly appealed to Madame de Maintenon for mercy, the latter wrote to Villars: "Imagine my joy at this communication," and refused to intercede. "They say that Villars is mad," she told Madame des Ursins; "I only wish the King had more madmen of his stamp. Our army in Germany costs us nothing!"[1]

In September, Villars retired across the Rhine; the Imperialists conquered Naples after a feeble resistance on the part of the Spanish garrisons, while Eugene and the Duke of Savoy invaded Provence. Eugene's long-cherished plan was the conquest of Toulon, the possession of which opened the surest road to Italy. The delays and the negligence of Victor Amadeo enabled Berwick to send French troops from Spain to Tessé at Toulon, before the arrival of the Allies. Eugene had to give up the siege after heavy losses and to effect his retreat. The Duc de Bourgogne was most anxious to get a command; there had been a question of sending him against his father-in-law, and he said bitterly to his wife that, as she hardly could wish him to be defeated, she had better pray for them both.[2] She was saved the heart-rending experience of such an encounter; in 1708 the Duc de Bourgogne was ordered to Flanders, and his wife's faithful devotion to him during this fatal campaign endeared her more than ever to his heart. On his way to Valenciennes, in May 1708, the Duc de Bourgogne stopped for the second time at

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xv. pp. 79, 181; notes 1, 2, p. 608.

[2] Abbé Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin*, &c., p. 173; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 134, 137, 140.

Cambrai. He saw the Archbishop more freely than in 1702, but the interview was again short, and he did not venture to accept his hospitality. The correspondence between them, however, had become very active and regular, and it was obvious that Fénelon was not reassured about the Prince's immediate future. His rigor, he told him, exacted too much of the majority of men; and his piety was not simple, tolerant and enlightened enough to appeal to them. Essential duties, not puerilities, had to be fulfilled; now that he was in command of an army, the knowledge of men was more important to him than the study of books. The first obligation of a ruler was to be kindly disposed towards his subordinates and accessible to all, in order to make the best use of their talents and abilities.[1] Things had changed. The Duc de Bourgogne had been admitted since 1702 into the King's Council, which was almost entirely composed of Fénelon's friends, and the Archbishop corresponded with them. The Prince had obtained from his grandfather the recall of Desmaretz to office after a disgrace of twenty years.[2] Chamillart had lately married his son to a daughter of the Duchesse de Mortemart, a lady who was one of Fénelon's most ardent disciples, and for this reason Madame de Maintenon had not liked the marriage. Beauvillier always acted in accordance with Chevreuse, whose occult ministry had become more effective than ever, and to Chevreuse Fénelon sent letters and memorandums on the condition of France.[3] He asked for nothing less than administrative decentralisation: "The tyranny of a despot," he said, "is

[1] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 245, 260–261, 430–431, 456–457; De Vogüé, *Le duc de Bourgogne et le duc de Beauvillier*, pp. 285, 289–293, 297.

[2] D'Argenson, *Mémoires;* A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 155, 161.

[3] Fénelon, *Lettre au duc de Chevreuse*, 1710; *Mémoires sur la situation de la France*, 1710; *Tables de Chaulnes;* Beausset, *Histoire de Fénelon*, vii. p. 590 ff.; *Pièces justificatives*, p. 771.

a deadly crime against natural law, which is older than all human institutions; the limitless exercise of freedom by a corrupt people is no less tyrannical. It is the task of an enlightened government to find a middle course between the two extremes, and to establish liberty under the reign of law. . . ." And he added the prophetic words: "Sovereigns must realise that absolute power is madness and the destruction of their own authority. If they do not, a sudden and terrible revolution will destroy their power instead of moderating its excess." Yet Fénelon refrained from advising the immediate convocation of the States-General, because he considered it dangerous suddenly to grant liberty to a nation accustomed to live in dependence, but he insisted on the necessity of convoking the *notables*. It was obvious that his proposals were intended for the coming reign.

The Dauphin's health was failing, and the Duc de Bourgogne was the hope of all the advocates of reform. Not only Fénelon and his circle, which included Saint-Simon, but also the Duc du Maine, appealed to the young Prince's knowledge in matters of finance and administration. He had read the *Dîme royale*, and had a sincere admiration for its author, Vauban, although he did not share his views. When the penury of the exchequer compelled Chamillart to raise a new tax, the Dixième, he vehemently protested in Council against the whole system which rendered necessary such exorbitant charges.[1] He was so essentially a prince of peace that he consulted theologians on the question whether a war against Spain, which was contemplated in 1710, could be justified even on the assumption that it was the last hope for France. Louis XIV. tolerated his grandson's freedom of speech in all matters

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xx. p. 180, notes 2, 5; xix. p. 176, note 1; Madame Dunoyer, *Lettres*, iv. pp. 127–133.

concerning internal administration, but he alone decided military matters. When he sent the Duc de Bourgogne in conjunction with Vendôme to Flanders, Beauvillier foresaw that the Prince would be sacrificed to the Marshal, and Fénelon trembled for his pupil's prestige. "Vendôme," he wrote, "has no foresight; he risks much, thinks everything possible and easy, does not believe in or listen to anybody, has great valour, the best intentions, and an incorrigible laziness."[1] He knew the Duc de Bourgogne to be timid and slow in his decisions, and yet resolved to carry them through when he had come to the conclusion that it was his duty to do so. Fire and water were not more incompatible than these two men, and moreover their powers were not clearly defined. The Duc de Bourgogne was nominally in command, but Vendôme could not be expected to submit to him. "I have orders to obey Monsieur de Vendôme," the Prince wrote to Madame de Maintenon, with whom he corresponded; "if the King gave me the necessary authority, I would make use of it rarely, but always in the interests of the service."[2] This request was not granted; the two commanders soon had serious differences, and they both appealed to the King's authority. The first news which reached him from the seat of war was reassuring. The Duc de Bourgogne had captured Bruges and Ghent, and Vendôme's rapid movements had saved western Flanders. In July the Marshal decided to besiege Oudenarde, while the Prince's advice was to take up a defensive position. Marlborough was waiting for Eugene's arrival with 35,000 German troops. When Eugene had joined him, but before his army could take the

[1] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 241–242; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 171; D'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne*, &c., iii. p. 164 ff.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 165, 169.

field, Marlborough, though weaker than Vendôme by 10,000 men, by a forced march interposed his troops between him and the French frontier and met him on the Scheldt at Oudenarde.[1] Vendôme, again rejecting the advice of Bourgogne, determined to attack the Allies. His vanguard, unsupported by the Prince, met with a disastrous repulse, and then only did Bourgogne give the order for a general advance. On July 11 the battle, which was stoutly contested, ended with the complete rout of the French. Their beaten and demoralised army was in danger of being captured, but the remnants of it rallied near Ghent. The King's grandson, Berry, and the Pretender James, under the name of Chevalier de Saint Georges, had valiantly taken part in the action. It was noticed that, while it raged, the unsuspecting monarch was offering a collation to the ladies in the forest near Fontainebleau. The first information came from Bourgogne, who wrote to Beauvillier that he did not think he was to blame: "When I arrived on the field, the situation was such that we would, all of us, have been taken, although I had no greater desire than to push forward." Vendôme, however, made him responsible for the disaster: "You want to retire," he said in Bourgogne's presence to his officers on the evening after Oudenarde; "Monseigneur has wished to do so for a long time."[2] The Prince remained silent. When the fatal news reached the Court, the emotion was indescribable. Like Paris and the army itself, Versailles was divided into two camps, the Vendômistes and the Bourguignons. Chamillart sided with the Marshal against Beauvillier and Chevreuse. "Vendôme, who always believes what he wishes to be true, carried his way, and thereby lost the battle," Madame

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvi. App. v. pp. 526–537; *Le Combat d'Oudenarde*.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvi. pp. 187–188.

de Maintenon wrote to Madrid. Berwick was ordered from the Moselle to Flanders with a force of 20,000 men; he reluctantly consented to serve under Vendôme, and always acted in accordance with the Duc de Bourgogne.[1]

Marlborough now boldly advised the invasion of France; the scheme was rejected and the siege of Lille decided upon in August. Louis XIV. sent Chamillart to the army, with orders to report on its condition, and the veteran Boufflers undertook the defence of Lille. The agitation at Versailles increased. "Everybody is in tears; people are more anxious than I am myself," Madame de Maintenon told Madame des Ursins: "The King alone is resolute, and expects an engagement for the deliverance of Lille and for the honour of the nation. . . . The discord among the best people is incredible, and the freedom of speech limitless. Monsieur de Chamillart is astounded at the speeches he heard from the army, and although I am nearly always shut up in my rooms, the language of the Court astonishes me. There is not a young lady who doesn't decide on military matters, blames or approves and touches on the most delicate chords, without the slightest regard for persons, however respectable." She was thinking of Chamillart. "His best friends abuse and ridicule him; he, the most sensitive of men, is exposed to the most cruel and offensive aggressions. The little I know about it makes me long to become a hermit. . . . I detest the Court."[2]

While cabals were busy doing mischief at Versailles, the generals continued to quarrel with each other; the Duc de Bourgogne, instead of opposing Vendôme, gave way to him on an important occasion, with the result that a vast convoy of ammunition and

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvi. App. vi. pp. 538–630; *La Campagne de Flandres* (Lettres et Documents).

[2] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, &c., iv. 1708.

stores sent over from England arrived safely in the camp of the Allies. Fénelon would not accept the Prince's explanations; he blamed his want of initiative, and urged him to assert his authority.[1] But Lille could not be saved. "The Princes"—Marlborough, now a Prince of the Empire, and Eugene—conquered, first the town and then the citadel, which surrendered on December 9, 1708, after a brave defence. The French retreated within their frontier; Vendôme and the Duc de Bourgogne returned to Versailles. The cabal of the Vendômistes had done its worst. Even the Dauphin, excited by the Princesse de Conti, severely blamed his son. The Duchesse de Bourbon and her associates provided the *Chansonnier français* with abominable verses, "des chansons atroces," says Saint-Simon, against the Prince, whose spotless life condemned their own, and whose piety they ridiculed.[2]

The Duchesse de Bourgogne was exasperated. The energy with which she stood up in defence of her husband was a most welcome surprise to Madame de Maintenon, who pitied and admired her.[3] "Those two are one soul in two bodies," wrote Elisabeth Charlotte.

The Duc de Bourgogne tried to calm his wife's indignation against Vendôme. "I pass condemnation on the reproaches which I deserve," he told Fénelon. "I despise the others, and I forgive those who inflict them by praying for them every day of my life."[4] To his brother Philip, to Madame

[1] Berwick, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 14–16; Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 239–246, 249–250, 253, 254, 284; Bourgogne to Fénelon, p. 251.

[2] D'Haussonville, *La duchesse de Bourgogne*, &c., iii. chap. v., "La Revanche des Libertins"; chap. vii., "Le Triomphe de la Cabale"; De Vogüé, *Le duc de Beauvillier et le duc de Bourgogne*, pp. 232–238, 246, 259–260; *Lettres de la duchesse d'Orléans*, &c., recueil Jaeglé, ii. pp. 101–102.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Correspondance authentique*, ii. pp. 125, 132–133, 169–170, 175, 176, 179, 181, 184, 210.

[4] Abbé Millot, *Mémoires de Noailles*, p. 407; Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 246, 251, 270–271, 278–279.

de Maintenon and Beauvillier, he spoke in the most measured terms of Vendôme's behaviour. He asked the Marquise to try and pacify the Duchesse de Bourgogne; the energy with which she stood up for him delighted him, but her intemperate language gave him pain. His wife would not share in his meek resignation; she refused to see Vendôme, although the King received him graciously. The fall of Lille had bitterly disappointed him, and he blamed the inaction of his army, which Madame de Maintenon called "shameful," although she had never believed that Lille could be saved.[1] The Duc de Bourgogne had refused to attack the enemy, whose position he thought impregnable, and he and Vendôme had again differed.[2] Chamillart and Berwick approved of his decision, while Fénelon would not be convinced by his pupil's arguments, and frankly told him that the public was indignant.[3] Bourgogne's friends looked forward with trepidation to the moment of his return to Versailles, where he was expected on December 11. The King was at work with Pontchartrain in Madame de Maintenon's apartment. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, pacing to and fro in restless agitation, anxiously watched his countenance, when suddenly the doors were thrown open, and her husband came in. Louis XIV. changed colour, then, quickly recovering himself, he went up to his grandson, folded him in his arms, and asked in a playful tone if he had nothing to say to his wife. Not a word was uttered about the war. The courtiers merely noticed that the gallant young Duc de Berry's reception was more hearty than that of his brother, and a sting remained. A few days later, the King held a council of war. "I expect you, unless

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, &c., 1708, août-décembre.

[2] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 239-240, 249-250, 253-254, 284; Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin*, &c., pp. 180-183, 186-187, 187-204.

[3] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 255, 260-261.

you should prefer to attend vespers," he said to the Duc de Bourgogne.[1]

Boufflers was rewarded with the highest honours for his conduct at Lille. Vendôme was deprived of a command in the next campaign, but the King tempered this act of severity by signs of favour. The Princes were not again sent to the field,[2] and the Duc d'Orléans was recalled from Spain for political reasons. His military renown had not suffered; he had taken Tortosa in July, but Sardinia was lost "through the infamy of its population," said Madame des Ursins, who foresaw that the victorious commanders of the English fleet would now attack Minorca and Port-Mahon, which fell into their hands in September. Up to the end of the campaign of 1708, the Duc d'Orléans acted in full agreement with Amelot, the Princess, Chamillart and Madame de Maintenon. He had done his best to procure money and supplies, and Madame des Ursins was so anxious to please him, that she wanted Madame de Maintenon to obtain the King's consent for the appointment of the Duke's mistress as lady-in-waiting to Marie-Louise. Madame de Maintenon answered that she was far from being intolerant in such matters, but that she deeply regretted, for the Duc d'Orléans' own sake, that he had made such a demand.[3] When Louis XIV. heard of it he indignantly refused. In the meantime, the Duc d'Orléans had become very popular at Madrid, and began to meddle with State affairs. One day he had supper in gay company with his officers, and, heated by wine, he proposed a most offensive toast on the two ladies who governed Spain. His words excited great hilarity and were reported to

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvii. p. 391.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvii. pp. 226, 319, 569; A. Geffroy, *Lettres de la Princesse des Ursins*, pp. 196 ff., 282, 288; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv. 1709.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 242, 245.

PHILIPPE, DUC D'ORLÉANS
From the painting by Mignard

Madame des Ursins, who mentioned the incident to Madame de Maintenon: "I wish," she said, "the Prince would behave in his intimacy as he does at the head of his troops. . . . I am sure that he is sorry to have said certain things which he has every reason to regret." She never forgave the insult, and became all the more hostile when she found out that the Duc d'Orléans was assuming the character of a possible pretender to the Spanish throne. Elisabeth Charlotte, who would not admit that her son was in the wrong, spoke of Madame des Ursins "as an incarnate demon, whom the Duke had found too old to be her lover."[1] When he left Madrid their good understanding had come to an end. At Versailles he saw Madame de Maintenon immediately after his arrival. He admitted having met with serious difficulties in Spain, but declared himself ready to return and to fight once more for Philip's cause; but Philip, acting on the instigation of Madame des Ursins, had already asked for the recall of the Duc d'Orléans. The Spanish monarch had in his possession written evidence that the Duke was in communication with discontented Spanish grandees and with the English commander, Stanhope, whom he had known in the days of his youth. To them he had promised to come forward as a candidate for the throne in the case of Philip's expulsion from Spain. Louis XIV. would not see the Duc d'Orléans. Saint-Simon, who belonged to his party, does not attempt to deny the truth of the accusation. But, he says, the projects of the Duke were not treasonable; it would have been to the advantage of France if another Bourbon, instead of a foreigner, had succeeded Philip; and besides, as his throne was once more secure, there was no reason to attach importance to proposals which had become obsolete.[2]

[1] *Lettres de la duchesse d'Orléans*, &c., ed. Brunet, ii. p. 40.

[2] Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, ii. pp. 33 ff., 55, 98; Combes, *La Princesse des Ursins*, pp. 307, 340, 382; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xviii. pp. 45–81 et notes, 315, 394, 415.

Louis XIV. came to a different conclusion, and the Duc d'Orléans fell into disgrace. Madame des Ursins stated her opinion of him in the strongest terms. Madame de Maintenon avoided criticising "a Prince who was entitled to her respect."[1] Yet she did confess to her friend that she was on the very worst terms with Elisabeth Charlotte, "who rendered her honours to which she did not pretend, and pursued her with a hatred which she did not deserve."[2] The Duc de Saint-Simon was severely admonished by the King, and asked to bridle his wicked tongue and to abstain from aggressive speeches and invective against men and things. Yet the audience ended not unfavourably for the culprit, and it was he who now advised the Duc d'Orléans to obtain a reconciliation with the monarch through the good offices of Madame de Maintenon.[3] She did not refuse her mediation, but made it a condition that he should first dismiss his mistress. The King then received and pardoned his nephew, whose most ardent wish was to marry his daughter to the Duc de Berry. He succeeded, thanks to the good-will of Madame de Maintenon.

When the marriage was settled after protracted negotiations, Saint-Simon requested the favour of an audience from her. His wife was to be nominated lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse de Berry; he tells the story in his own way, but mentions the graceful reception the Marquise gave him, and the readiness with which she met his wishes.[4] He considered it due to his dignity to assert his independence by calumniating her all the more, and this period in her life is marked by the most furious attacks against her. It was the moment at which the disasters in the field had been followed by another unheard-of calamity.

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 221, 362.
[2] Ibid., p. 250.
[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xviii. p. 314 ff.
[4] Ibid., xviii. p. 385.

The "great winter" of 1709 had set in. It was sc terrible that many thousands died of cold and starvation.[1] Vineyards and olive groves were destroyed; want and scarcity led to open revolt; famished crowds threatened the Dauphin and the Duchesse de Bourgogne on their way through Paris; other towns were so crowded with beggars that they were driven out into the fields, where they perished. In whole districts peasants lived on chestnuts, acorns and grass, and left the land untilled. The soldiery, being neither fed nor paid, lived on plunder; desertions in masses could not be averted, nor force employed against rebellion. Marshal Boufflers, who was very popular in Paris, was sent there to try and pacify the hungry crowds and distribute money. The Venetian envoy did not consider the King safe at Versailles unless peace was concluded, for an angry mob assembled under the windows of the palace and asked for bread. Louis XIV. heard threats. "They tell him that he ought to stop his expenses and that the residences at Marly ruin the State," wrote Madame de Maintenon; "they want to deprive him of his horses, his dogs, his furniture, and his whole retinue. . . . These things are said at his doors."[2] He ordered retrenchments to be made, gave up going to Marly, reduced the expenses for his table, paid the pensioners out of his private purse, and sent invaluable treasures of art in gold and silver to the mint. The example was promptly followed, but the desired results were not obtained. Madame de Maintenon's plate fetched a few thousand livres; the King's had been estimated at ten millions, yet the value in metal was found to be three millions only. In 1710 he tried to pawn his jewels, because the

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvii. pp. 26, 27, 195–196, 404–412, notes; xx. p. 447 ff.; Sourches, *Mémoires*, p. 350; A. Geffroy, *Correspondance authentique*, ii. p. 210; Boislisle, "Le grand Hiver de 1709," *Revue des Questions hist.*, 1903.

[2] E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, viii. p. 459.

Court's purveyors insisted upon being paid on delivery and there was no money with which to settle their accounts. All these measures were drops in the sea; the State was practically bankrupt; the population of France was reduced by one-twelfth, and even by one-fourth, in the most impoverished districts. "There was oil in the lamp when people laughed at my first book," wrote Bois-Guillebert; "now the oil is consumed."

On April 18, 1709, the Dauphin, the Duc de Bourgogne, Pontchartrain, Beauvillier, Chamillart, Desmaretz and Torcy conferred with the King. The emotion was so great that tears were shed, and Chamillart, Beauvillier, Desmaretz, and Torcy spoke of the condition of France as hopeless.

CHAPTER XVI

FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS, 1709—CHAMILLART'S FALL —MALPLAQUET, 1709—SPAIN SAVED, 1710—VILLARS AT DENAIN, 1712—UTRECHT, 1713—RASTADT AND BADEN, 1714

NEGOTIATIONS had been going on at the Hague since March 1709. At the beginning of May Torcy went there himself. The efforts of the French diplomatists to come to a separate understanding with the Dutch were frustrated by Heinsius, who would only negotiate in conjunction with the Allies. Louis XIV. was prepared to give up the whole Spanish inheritance, with the sole exception of Naples and Sicily. He was ready to surrender Mons, Namur, and Strassburg, Lille alone being restored to France. An enormous sum was offered to Marlborough to repay his advocacy of peace. He had once before sought favour at Saint-Germain by betraying the expedition to Brest; now, however, he would not be bribed, nor did he resist the exorbitant demands of the Austrians. Prince Eugene proved unrelenting; his avowed intention was to render France powerless for generations to come; he asked for Alsace and the Franche-Comté; the Dutch required guarantees and the right of garrisoning fortified places in the Spanish Netherlands; they also proposed that Valenciennes, Saint-Omer, and Cambrai should be pledged to the States-General till the surrender by Philip of the Spanish crown.[1] Louis XIV. was to obtain his grandson's renunciation

[1] Sourches, *Mémoires*, p. 343; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvii., App. x. p. 598, duc du Maine à Madame de Maintenon.

by August 1, or, in case this was not effected, take measures in conjunction with the Allies to bring about the cession of Spain. This ultimatum, presented to Torcy on May 28, further demanded the expulsion of the Pretender from France and the recognition of the Hanoverian succession in England.

On the same day Torcy left the Hague, and intimated to Prince Eugene that Louis XIV. rejected the preliminaries. "The news brought by Torcy," wrote Madame de Maintenon on June 3, "fills everybody who has a drop of French blood in his veins with indignation."[1] Marlborough himself admitted "that were he in the place of the King of France, he would much sooner venture the loss of his country than be obliged to join his troops for the forcing his grandson."[2]

Louis XIV., with the courage of despair, now appealed to his people. The manifesto, issued from Versailles, in which he exposed the situation, met with an enthusiastic response. All classes rallied round the monarch, recruits flocked to the ranks, and Villars, who had been in command in Flanders since March, received the intimation that the war was to proceed. Bouffler generously offered to serve under him, and on June 9 Chamillart was dismissed. "The King," wrote Madame de Maintenon to Madame des Ursins, "has been compelled to obey public opinion. . . . The obstinacy with which Chamillart, poor man, counted upon a peaceful solution has led him to neglect all military preparations. He is responsible for the peril of the situation."[3]

His successor, Voysin, was well known to her; he and his wife had offered her hospitality in Flanders in

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 207, 211, 213, 218.
[2] *Cambridge Modern History*, v. p. 423.
[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvii. pp. 190, note 5, 422, 425, note 10, 442, note 6; App. ix. pp. 580–582; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv. p. 281.

1692; she liked them both, and Voysin's nomination to the War Office was attributed to her. "It is the triumph of Madame de Maintenon," says Saint-Simon, who praises Voysin's wife, but calls him "insolent, hard, servile, and of low origin," although he was related to Desmaretz. He was a parliamentarian and an honest man like Chamillart, and the Marquise affirms that his choice was due to the Dauphin's interference.[1]

After having been made responsible for Chamillart's elevation, she was accused of having brought about his fall by the vilest intrigues, in order to revenge herself for his proposal that the King should go to his army at Lille without her. It was further said that she had given him orders to prevent the decisive battle which might have saved the fortress; that it was she who had nominated La Feuillade, and thereby lost Turin, and that D'Harcourt was her favourite whom she wanted to be minister.[2]

Elisabeth Charlotte accused her of speculating on grain and enriching herself at the expense of starving populations, a calumny which deserves no refutation. She herself was pursued with anonymous letters, in which she was asked how long she intended to drink the people's blood. Her liberty and even her life were threatened.[3] One of the many satires which were circulated against her ended with the lines:

"Pour vous expliquer en deux mots
Ce qui se passe dans la France,
Des ordres, abus, édits, impôts,
Et circonstance et dépendance,
Louis ne prête que le nom,
Le reste est à la Maintenon."

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[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, &c., ii. pp. 211, 218, 213; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv. 1709.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvi. p. 319, note 1; xvii. pp. 26, 159 ff., 471, 473; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 211, 218, 251–252; Madame de Maintenon sur d'Harcourt.

[3] Narbonne, *Journal*, p. 11.

The King was severely criticised too.

> "Le grand-père est un fanfaron,
> Le fils un imbécile,
> Le pétit-fils un grand poltron,
> Oh ! la belle famille."

Torcy, who made use of secret reporters and knew what was said in Paris, had thirty of these agents arrested, because they circulated news and kept even ambassadors informed of what was going on at Versailles. By express order of Louis XIV., so-called *nouvellistes*, who provided the public with gossip and whose letters were sent all over France, were imprisoned in the Bastille; others expiated their disobedience in the galleys, and yet libels could not be stopped.[1] Madame de Maintenon felt more sorry for the King than for herself: "It is a great misfortune to love where you cannot guide," she once wrote to Madame des Ursins. "The King requires rest, and instead of giving him rest, I am obliged constantly to worry him. . . . He was too proud, and he has been humiliated. France aspired too high, and, perhaps, her pretentions were unjust; the nation had become insolent and perverted. . . . I am too old to hope for better days or to witness revolutions, which our monarchs may yet be destined to face."[2] The same fatal words had been uttered by Fénelon. But Madame des Ursins was not in a mood to listen to them. To her the determination of Louis XIV. to abandon Spain seemed the most lamentable error. Amelot, the soul of the Government, sided with her. He asked for his recall rather than be obliged to commit himself to a policy which he condemned. The Queen and the Princess would not give him up and deplored the loss

[1] Funk-Brentano et P. d'Estrées, "Les Nouvellistes à la main: Figaro et ses devanciers," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1 juillet 1909; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 358; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, i. p. 331.

[2] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iii., iv., 1706–1709; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 185–189—1708.

of their most enlightened adviser. He asked to be replaced by the honest, insignificant Blécourt. Philip now had the greatest difficulty in obtaining his grandfather's consent that a small French contingent should be left in Spain, while the main body of the troops was sent to Flanders.[1] To the disappointment of Madame des Ursins, the Papal Government could not be assisted against the Imperialists, whereupon Clement XI. acknowledged the Archduke. A quarrel with Rome did not frighten the Princess in the least. She had recourse to violent measures. The Nuncio was expelled from Madrid, the Spanish ambassador recalled from Rome, and a war tax—the *Crusada*—levied on all church property. The Cortes having proclaimed the little Prince of Asturias successor to the Crown, Louis XIV. deemed it advisable to break the resistance of the Spaniards by removing Madame des Ursins. However, he would not give distinct orders, and left it for her to decide. She declared herself ready to go, but waited for her recall, and it was not long before she was informed by Torcy that the King wanted her to remain at her post.[2] In August 1709 she had sent a memorandum to Villeroy, who was to hand it on to Madame de Maintenon. It contained a vast project of financial reform. "In the shortest time and in a miraculous way," she affirmed, millions were to be brought to the treasury without any new taxes being levied. The document is lost; the only indication as to its probable contents is to be found in Madame de Maintenon's reply. It was asking too much of the King, she answered, to

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv., 1709; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, v. pp. 357–358, 363, 373–374, 398–399; A. Geffroy, *Lettres de Madame des Ursins*, pp. 252–253, 272–273, 280–281, 294, 306, 367–368, 375–376.

[2] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, v., mars-avril 1710; Dangeau, *Journal;* P. Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, i. p. 370 ff.

expect a change of system from him after a reign of sixty years; and, besides, he did not like the interference of ladies in State affairs.[1] At that time, however, the Queen of Spain was again Regent, Philip having joined the army on the Catalonian frontier, commanded by Marshal Bezons. His hold on the Peninsula was still unshaken, and both Madame des Ursins and the Queen were determined that he should remain King. Madame de Maintenon, however, gave up his cause: "Frenchmen want peace," she wrote in July; "Boufflers, Torcy, Villeroy, Harcourt, Desmaretz and Villars have all come to the same conclusion. You are too good a Frenchwoman to desire the ruin of France in order that Spain may be saved. . . . The passionate anger which fills your soul is a proof of your courage, but also of your distrust of me. If you were here, Madame, you would think as I do, instead of declaring that it is better to perish than to give way. I think that it is imperative to submit, that the arm of God is against us, and that the King owes more to his people than to himself. . . . Our ministers are neither responsible for famine, nor for the revolt of the elements and of the populations. My own private views don't weigh in the balance; I freely state them, because they are of no account. . . . I don't go as far as to admit that the dethronement of the King and Queen of Spain may ever become desirable for us, but words cannot express the King's grief, the sorrow of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and my own sufferings."

Madame des Ursins became very ironical. She asked her friend if by chance she expected the firmament to fall on their heads, so as to complete their misfortunes? Madame de Maintenon found her embittered, unable and unwilling to understand:

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 238; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv., août 1709.

"Princes who are as unhappy as those whom she serves have a right to complain, and even to be a little unjust. I shall not change towards her, but our relations are becoming very unpleasant."[1] Yet the two ladies had one faith in common: they believed in Villars, who had reorganised an army of 90,000 men. On September 11, 1709, the greatest battle in modern Europe before the time of Napoleon was fought at Malplaquet.[2] Villars was severely wounded, and had to give up the command to Boufflers; the strong French entrenchments were carried by the Allies, who were once more victorious. But the contest had been severe; Marlborough and Eugene lost 23,000, the French only 12,000 men, and Boufflers retreated in good order. Eugene himself spoke of an unparalleled and glorious resistance;[3] bonfires were lit in Spain when the news arrived, and Madame des Ursins spoke more firmly than ever: only cowards could speak of submission now that the Imperialists had been repulsed on the Rhine, and that the Duke of Savoy's inaction paralysed their forces. She could not convince Madame de Maintenon: "Desmaretz," she answered, "is asked for millions, and has not a penny; he is obliged to starve the peasants in order to feed the soldiers."[4] The optimistic Villars himself declared that the country's fate depended on the chance of a day and Torcy resumed negotiations at the Hague which led in March 1710 to the conferences at Gertruydenberg.

After Malplaquet, Louis XIV. had informed Philip V. that peace was impossible as long as he remained in Spain and that the bitter truth could no longer be hidden. Philip gave his grandfather clearly

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, v., 27 avril, 24 juin, 15 juillet, 28 octobre 1709.

[2] Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 261.

[3] Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., i. p. 380 ff.

[4] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, v., Sept. 1710.

to understand that, if he deserted him, he would negotiate with the Allies, and, if necessary, make war against France.[1] The campaign of 1710 had begun when Louis XIV. went as far as to offer the Allies monetary subsidies for their coercive operations against his grandson. In return he asked for Sicily only. The Emperor and the Dutch rejected all his proposals, and Marlborough, who was preponderant in their councils, had personal reasons for prolonging the war. He was losing ground in England and accordingly supported the excessive demands of the Powers, which rendered a continuation of the conferences hopeless. In July 1710 Louis XIV. recalled his plenipotentiaries, and spoke the historic words, that if war was forced upon him, he would rather fight his enemies than his children. "Don't scold me any more—there is no question of peace," wrote Madame de Maintenon to her friend at Madrid; and Torcy added that the enemies' pride and injustice had greatly profited the King of Spain.[2] Philip V. now asked for Vendôme. Madame des Ursins had always thought highly of his abilities and deplored the conflicts between him and the Duc de Bourgogne. The Prince agreed most generously with his brother's request, and Vendôme went to Spain. When he arrived there in September, the Archduke had invaded Aragon and defeated Philip and his French contingent at Almenara and Saragossa.

For the second time Madrid was occupied by the Allies, and the heroic young Queen fled to Valladolid with Madame des Ursins. Marshal Bezons, who was in command of the French, had retired without giving battle, and it was suspected that he had done so by

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres de la Princesse des Ursins*, p. 372; E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, viii. p. 119, Blécourt à Torcy, avril 1710.

[2] P. Baudrillart, *Philippe V. et la Cour de France*, i. p. 405 ff.; *Une mission en Espagne*, p. 76; La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, v. pp. 118, 140, 154, nov.-mars 1710–1711.

order of Louis XIV. "If he obeyed the King," wrote the indignant Princess, "the respect I owe to his Majesty forbids me to hold his generous soul capable of an action which is condemned by all honest men. The tactics which consist in inspiring pity in one's adversaries are most unfortunate. . . . Their Catholic Majesties are convinced that Marshal Bezons is alone responsible for this cowardice." She fell ill with measles at Valladolid, and had hardly recovered when she told Torcy: "Our lodgings are icy, and we suffer all sorts of discomfort. All this does not matter as long as hearts are contented like ours. You would not deserve to be *jeté aux chiens* if you thought otherwise. What Abbé de Polignac[1] predicted to the Dutch will come true; we are going to negotiate without them, and on our own grounds." The tide had turned. The Castilians worshipped their Queen and rose once more in defence of Philip's crown. Madrid soon proved untenable; Vendôme defeated the retreating Allies at Brihuega and Villaviciosa, and the Habsburg claimant was again confined to Catalonia. Even there he was not safe. To Madame de Maintenon's intense satisfaction, D'Ayen, who in 1702 had become Duc de Noailles, took Girona: "Noailles has good reason to be half crazy with joy after results which he always predicted," she wrote to Madame des Ursins,[2] who was too cautious to remind her friend that she had done the reverse and given up the game as lost. Among those who congratulated Vendôme on his victories was the Duc de Bourgogne, who could truly assure him of the unselfish sincerity of his praise. Louis XIV. warmly thanked Madame des Ursins for the energy with which she had contributed to save Spain for his dynasty.[3] His army,

[1] One of the French negotiators in Holland.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xx. p. 295, note 8; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 270.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 239.

which stood in Flanders, had not been able to prevent the capture by the Allies of the fortresses built by Vauban. Villars avoided a decisive engagement, rather than risk the last military forces of France, when the event took place which changed the political situation in Europe. On April 17, 1711, the Emperor Joseph died suddenly without leaving issue. The Archduke, who called himself Charles III. of Spain, left Catalonia; he was elected Emperor in the following October and carried on the war on the Rhine till 1714. But Torcy had known since January that the Tory Government, which was now in power, was determined to bring the war to an end. The new ministers informed Torcy through secret agents that England would give up Spain and the Indies to the Bourbon King, and would desert the Allies as soon as trade interests were provided for. On these conditions negotiations were carried on between England and France.

Marlborough's last exploit was the capture of Bouchain in July; in December he was summarily dismissed. British subsidies and British contingents had been the main support of the Alliance. In July 1712 Eugene was informed of the conclusion of an armistice between Great Britain and France, and the English contingent was withdrawn. The Austro-Germans and the Dutch who fought with Eugene at Denain on July 24 were defeated by Villars, with the result that at the Congress, which had been assembled at Utrecht since January, the action of the French plenipotentiaries was strengthened by the restored prestige of the French arms. The diplomatists of Louis XIV. had served him admirably under desperate conditions; they now concluded a disastrous war by a successful negotiation. England acquired Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the Hudson Bay territory, kept Gibraltar and Port Mahon, and obtained a treaty of commerce

and navigation which assured her ascendancy. The Dutch secured their Barrier fortresses and a favourable tariff. The Duke of Savoy increased his possessions and was acknowledged King of Sicily. Philip V. considered himself legitimate sovereign of Spain and heir-presumptive to France by right of inheritance and by the divine right of kings, and refused to submit these rights to the sanction of congresses and treaties.[1] In 1712 Louis XIV. extracted from him a solemn renunciation to the succession in France, which was the primary condition of peace. He himself acknowledged the Protestant succession in England as established by the Act of 1702, and consented to exile the Pretender from his realm. Yet even after Utrecht both Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon counted upon a Catholic restoration in England.[2] He readily trusted Bolingbroke's promises that the Hanoverian dynasty would not last, and that King James would be restored. A similar belief that treaties were not binding dictated Philip's policy towards France. Before Louis XIV. died, his grandson's attitude indicated that the fears which Madame de Maintenon had expressed in 1701 were not unfounded, and that the alliance between the Bourbon crowns might not outlast his reign.

The Emperor, abandoned by his allies, showed himself immovable in his resolution to carry on the war. The leader who was indispensable to France was the victorious Villars, who was sent to command on the Rhine. He invested Landau, which capitulated in August 1713, and conquered Fribourg. His old rival, Prince Eugene, was reduced to a purely cunctatory strategy. Charles, whose arms were defeated

[1] P. Baudrillart, *Prétentions de Philippe V. à la Couronne de France;* E. Bourgeois, *Le secret du Régent*, &c., pp. 21, notes 2, 3, 24–25, notes, 27–29, documents.

[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 315, 327, à la Princesse des Ursins, 27 février, 9 juin 1713.

in Catalonia, gradually began to recognise the futility of his efforts to carry on the struggle alone, and consented to the first negotiations, through British mediation, between Eugene and Villars. The Marshal received full powers to act in the name of the French King and met Prince Eugene at Rastadt in November 1713. They knew each other and became great friends. The Austrian negotiator reported to Vienna that it was Villars' ambition to pacify Europe, but that his position was insecure at Versailles, where he was disliked by the courtiers and distrusted by Torcy. Madame de Maintenon received confidential communications from him, and she and Voysin were in reality his only supporters.[1] Success had increased his self-confident optimism and he drew up an agreement whose acceptance he called "glorious for France." It was haughtily rejected by Louis XIV., who insisted on the restoration of the Elector of Bavaria, and on other demands which Prince Eugene declared inadmissible. Villars went back to Strassburg; he was bitterly disappointed, and complained of being treated like a schoolboy "by impostors who calumniated him at Versailles."[2] However, he did not lose heart, and in February he sent a trusted agent to Louis XIV., who handed to the King, in Madame de Maintenon's presence, the ultimatum obtained by Villars from Prince Eugene. Negotiations were resumed; Louis XIV. showed a more yielding disposition and peace between France and the Emperor was signed at Rastadt on March 6, 1714. Villars met with a triumphant reception at Versailles, and, to Madame de Maintenon's relief, "perhaps for the first time in his life," he asked for nothing.[3]

The Empire had as yet not given its consent to

[1] De Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., ii. pp. 58, 64.
[2] Ibid., chap. viii. pp. 96, 103 ff.
[3] Ibid., pp. 115–116.

the treaty of Rastadt, but this was secured at the peace congress opened at Baden in Switzerland. Austria acquired the Spanish Netherlands, kept Naples, Sardinia and the Milanese, and consented to the restoration of the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne, but did not recognise Philip in Spain. The Empire ratified the stipulations of the treaty of Ryswyck; Landau remained French.

Villars was still at Baden when he heard that Villeroy had replaced Beauvillier as president of the Council of Finance. He gave Madame de Maintenon to understand "that the luckiest general who had fought the last great wars and transacted the most important of all the King's negotiations" could expect nothing less than to be called into his councils.[1] On his return he insinuated to her in another letter that the services he had rendered deserved the rank and title of "Connétable." Madame de Maintenon did not encourage his pretensions. She sent him to Louis XIV., who was profuse in flatteries and complimentary words, but found Villars too turbulent to be a minister, and had no intention of raising him to a dignity which he considered useless and even dangerous. But he made Villars a member of the Council of Regency, which was to carry on the government after his death.[2]

Thus ended the relations of Madame de Maintenon with Villars. He remained grateful and loyal to her, but she declined to see him after she had retired to Saint-Cyr.

[1] De Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., ii. pp. 119–120, 121–122.
[2] Ibid., p. 132.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HARVEST OF DEATH AT VERSAILLES

The Grand Dauphin, April 1711—The Dauphine, February 1712—The Dauphin Duc de Bourgogne, February 18, 1712—The Duc de Bretagne, March 8, 1712—The Duc de Berry, 1714—The Queen of Spain, 1714—Fall of Madame des Ursins, 1714

Madame de Maintenon had prayed for peace and done everything in her power to convince those who were responsible for France of the necessity of securing it at almost any price.[1] When the blessings of peace were near, they could no longer gladden her heart. An inexorable fatality doomed the race of Louis XIV. to destruction and the hopes of the future were extinguished for ever.

Versailles embodied the royal state. The King would not allow the regular round of customary receptions and court functions to be interrupted; as soon as the political situation began to improve he wished to mark the change and ordered festivities for the Carnival of 1711, which was animated and even gay.

In April the Dauphin fell seriously ill at Meudon, his usual residence near Paris. Smallpox was a scourge in those days, and it was greatly feared that he had caught the infection. As a general rule, those only who had had the disease were allowed to nurse the patients or to go near them. Nevertheless, the Duc de Bourgogne and his wife immediately went

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 311, &c.; De Vogüé, *Villars*, &c., ii. pp. 91, 103. 119.

to Meudon and saw their father. The King, who in such cases showed no apprehension, visited the Dauphin several times every day, but when doubts about the nature of the illness were no longer possible, he sent his grandchildren back to Versailles and kept Madame de Maintenon out of the sick-room. The Duchesse de Bourbon and the Princesse de Conti, who were both on intimate terms with the Dauphin, nursed him with the greatest devotion; according to Saint-Simon, the King's confessor, Le Tellier, only came to see the patient when he had lost consciousness, and he died rather suddenly on April 15 without the comforts of his religion.[1] Madame de Maintenon was with the King during the hour in which he witnessed his son's agony; he was trembling from head to foot, unable to stand, and had to be supported when, all being over, he left Meudon and drove with her to Marly.

Saint-Simon's description of the scene at Versailles, of the farcical display of unreal sorrow, as well as the sincere emotion of genuine grief, is one of the masterpieces of literature and a document revealing the author's delight in merciless psychological analysis.[2] Thwarted ambitions deplored the shipwreck of their hopes, and nearly everybody turned towards the rising sun. The Duchesse de Bourgogne, who was now Dauphine, did not affect feelings which her father-in-law's cold indifference to her had neither demanded nor expected. Her attitude was dignified; she sympathised with her husband's sorrow, but she made no secret of her aversion towards the clique at Meudon, which had intrigued against her and insulted and ridiculed the young heir to the throne.[3] "I shall be their Queen!" she was heard to say. It was noticed that the new Dauphin was deadly pale, very silent and

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 276–280.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xxi. p. 5 ff.
[3] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 282.

much moved by the loss of a father whose affection he had courted and never been able to win. He and his wife went daily to Marly.

The King's grief did not interfere with his wonted activity. He took the greatest care of his grandchildren's health after having exposed his own, and gave them strict orders not to return to Meudon. In consequence of the effects wrought by the disease and of the panic which followed, the late Dauphin's remains were brought to Saint-Denis twenty-four hours after his death and without ceremonial, but amidst the tears and lamentations of the Paris crowd, whose predilection for him was genuine. He had always been popular in the capital, and on the day of his death he had received a deputation of the Dames des Halles, who had expressed their hopes and wishes for a speedy recovery. Yet the conviction that his reign would have been pernicious prevailed with all those who knew the weak, indolent man, "born to be bored and to bore." A fortnight after his death, when Louis XIV. returned to Versailles, he was forgotten. The King expressed the desire that henceforth his grandchildren should never leave him and have no residence of their own. Their relations became closer than ever; the Dauphin reciprocated his grandfather's affection for him with respectful submission, but now that he was freed from the hidden though always active opposition fostered by his father's antipathy against him, he seemed a new being. No trace of timidity was discernible. He was sociable, bright, ready to please and to be pleased, always dignified, though never distant or difficult of access. The tone of conversation changed at Versailles. The Dauphin was eager to learn, and made use of his own knowledge without any pedantry. He listened to what others had to say, but he spoke firmly whenever grave matters had to be decided. The King's behaviour to him was free from the petty jealousy which

generally deprives an heir to the throne of his legitimate share in the responsibilities of government. The ministers were ordered daily to work with the Dauphin, and he received deputations from all the great corporations of the State. When the assembly of the clergy sent its representatives, Louis XIV., turning towards his grandson, addressed them with the words: "This Prince will soon succeed me; his gifts and his piety will benefit the Church and increase the prosperity of the realm; he will make it happier than it was under my rule."[1] The late Dauphin's yearly income amounted to 600,000 livres; his son pronounced himself perfectly satisfied with the modest sum of 120,000 livres and would not accept more. He was well entitled to ask the advisers of the Crown with what right the people's blood was shed and their property destroyed, and he told them with tears in his eyes that an unjust Government could never prosper nor be blessed by God. He did not limit himself to criticising what existed. His programme of reform included a new system of taxation, which abolished pecuniary privileges. He recommended that the luxuries of life should be heavily taxed, all sinecures abolished, though not without adequate compensation, and insisted on fraudulent transactions being severely punished. Fénelon's proposal to reward the common soldiery by the creation of the so-called "grenadiers d'honneur" was adopted by his pupil, who was no less prepared than he to advocate the convocation of the States-General.[2] The treatise of the Abbé de Saint Pierre "On Everlasting Peace," which was published in 1712, and destined to be commented on by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and extolled by Leibniz and Kant, expresses the ideal hopes of the heir-presumptive. He was ever mindful of Fénelon's objurgation

[1] Dangeau, *Journal*, 17th June 1711.
[2] Abbé Proyart, *Vie du Dauphin*, i. p. 392; ii. pp. 5, 25.

"to be the father, not the master," and to live and to work for the happiness of the poor populations of France. He begged for Fénelon's recall from exile, but though Louis XIV. showed some signs of relenting, the prayer was not granted. Yet the Dauphin had but one real counsellor, the Archbishop of Cambrai. Fénelon continued to warn him "against trusting entirely to any one man," but at the same time he wrote to Chevreuse: "For Heaven's sake, don't let him slip out of our hands."[1] There was no cause for anxiety: the fascination was as strong as ever. Louis XIV. was over seventy, the heir-apparent was not thirty, and people flocked to Cambrai. There Fénelon was the real Governor of Flanders. He conferred with high officers, he tended the wounded and the sick of both armies, he transformed his palace into a hospital, and was the idol of the troops and the providence of his flock. Of his inmost thoughts or ambitions nothing transpired. At Versailles the Dauphine heard of him, and was no longer unhappy. With the buoyancy of youth she forgot her recent trials and reappeared on the scene as the enchantress who brightened the old King's days. She was the mother of two sons; her husband never interfered with her enjoyments, and her intimacy with Madame de Maintenon had increased with all the troubles they had suffered in common. She had the selfishness of her age, and took it for granted that the sympathy which had sustained her in misfortune would not fail her now that the storm had subsided. Her old friend did not want to disappoint her, but her strength was not equal to the task. For years she had suffered from fever, yet whenever the King went to Fontainebleau or to Marly, she was obliged to go with him, and although in both places she inhabited private houses of her own, she had

[1] Fénelon, *Œuvres*, vii. p. 86.

to be ready whenever he wanted her.[1] The thought that she required rest seems never to have occurred to him or to the Dauphine. Madame de Maintenon herself has recorded the sort of life she led at Versailles while the war lasted: "The King spends the morning with me till he goes to mass. I am not dressed. If I were so, I should have had no time to say my prayers. While I am still with my night-cap on my head, people come and go, and my room is like a church. After mass the King returns, followed by the Duchesse de Bourgogne and her ladies. They stay while I am dining. I ask for something to drink, and there is a rush to offer me a glass of water. The honour is great, but I would prefer to be served by my valets. . . . Being in my own house, it is for me to amuse my visitors, who are either like the Dauphin, and do not speak a word, or like the ladies, who chatter and giggle incessantly, and must be listened to. . . . They have rested, I have not. . . . The air is stifling; the King doesn't allow a window to be opened. . . . My old person is the object of universal attention because every request is addressed to me; I am always wanted, and I hate the Court. . . . As soon as the King returns from hunting, he comes back to me. He is alone, and I have to bear with his sadness, with his '*vapeurs*.' Sometimes he breaks out into tears. He is not talkative. Ministers bring bad news, and he works with them. If I am wanted, he calls me; if not, I retire into a quiet corner and try to pray for half-an-hour. Supper is served; he wishes me to have done with it as quickly as possible, and I have to eat my fruit with my meat. . . . It has grown late, I feel dead tired, and the years weigh on me. Since six o'clock in the morning, I haven't had a moment's peace. 'You are exhausted,' says the

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xix. p. 233; xxi. p. 10; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Souvenirs*, p. 183.

King, 'you ought to go to bed.' I undress as rapidly as ever I can, because he dislikes the presence of my women. He comes and sits at my bedside. I am not a glorified body, and nobody is near to help me. He is always and everywhere Lord and Master. The great never think of other people's hardships. Sometimes a bad cough takes my breath away and I feel sick. . . . The King remains till supper-time, at half-past ten; then the princes come and fetch him. This is my day. Very often I am too exhausted to be able to sleep."[1]

Madame de Maintenon was over seventy, when Madame Dunoyer, a Protestant lady who lived in the provinces and wrote reminiscences, described the impression produced by the Marquise on the public. Her behaviour, she says, was always very quiet, courteous and dignified, but she was rarely seen outside the palace, except when driving out with the King. She was very simply attired and had not given up wearing a diamond cross or the habit of working at a piece of embroidery, although she had to use spectacles. An Englishwoman, Lady Exeter, who happened to see her, was astonished at the beauty of her eyes and mouth, and noticed an incomparable charm which she could not define, and which old age had not been able to efface. Madame Dunoyer reports that Madame de Maintenon was not held accountable for the persecution of Protestants, but was generally believed to forget neither a friend nor an enemy.[2]

The companions of her former life were gone. Madame d'Heudicourt, one of the last persons who had known her in the days of Scarron, survived till 1709 and was regretted on account of old associations.

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 43, 1705.

[2] Madame Dunoyer, *Lettres historiques et galantes*, i. pp. 36, 55, 131; iv. p. 342.

Madame de Dangeau, "the good angel of Madame de Maintenon," as people used to say, replaced up to her end the friends who had disappeared or become estranged. The elder princes of the house of Condé, who had played no conspicuous part in public life, had also died. The most gifted representative of the race, the younger Prince de Conti, had never been employed by Louis XIV., although his military talents were of the very first rank; but, before his death, Madame de Maintenon reconciled him with the King. The Duchesse de Berry was no sooner married than she gave trouble. She drank immoderately and her morals "recalled those of the Queen of Navarre." At the same time she showed a restless ambition and a spirit of intrigue, not generally allied with these vices.[1] Madame la Duchesse and the widow of the elder Conti had counted on the Dauphin's reign as on the beginning of their own, and his death reduced them to insignificance. But their presence at Court gave rise to difficulties, and tolerable relations between them and the Dauphine were all that could be obtained. The endeavours of Louis XIV. to improve the morality of this younger generation engendered hypocrisy. He could exact the correct observance of religious practices; he was powerless to change the hearts of those who had witnessed the errors of his earlier days, and he had been duly warned by Bourdaloue "how the fear of displeasing him, the boundless passion to get on, to win his favour and all the advantages he had to bestow, had ripened consciences whose condition was monstrous." Even the correctness of outward bearing and the observance of etiquette gave way when his presence did not restrain the inmates of Versailles. Manners deteriorated to such a degree that Madame de Maintenon bitterly complained to

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, pp. 207–209; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 124, 296, 325.

Madame des Ursins about the behaviour of the younger generation: "Women of to-day are insupportable to me. Their absurd, shocking way of dressing, their tobacco, their wine, their voracity, their bad manners and their laziness are not only against my taste, but, as it seems to me, against common sense. I cannot stand them. I love intelligent, modest, sober women, who are capable of earnest thoughts, yet bright and witty without giving offence; women with clear heads and kind hearts, and clever enough to recognise themselves in the portrait which I have just drawn." Madame des Ursins had every reason to be flattered.

The Dauphine was an incessant cause of anxiety. Like her sister, the Queen of Spain, she belonged to a decadent race. Her health was never strong, and she taxed her strength to the utmost by a life of constant excitement, late hours, and irregular habits. On February 9, 1712, ten months after the elder Dauphin's death, she fell ill with fever, and soon afterwards measles broke out. The doctors had recourse to repeated blood-letting, they also gave opiates and made her smoke. Their treatment only precipitated the crisis. On February 11 Madame de Maintenon had to tell her beloved child that the moment had come for her to prepare herself for the inevitable end. The Dauphine received these tidings with the greatest fortitude; her death, she said, was the supreme sacrifice her husband would have to offer. He had not left her bedside, but he himself was so unwell that the King asked him to see his wife no more, lest he too should catch the infection. He obeyed, retired to his apartments, and communed with God.

The Dauphine's confessor was a Jesuit. "Live with them, don't die with them," was the Duke of Savoy's advice to his daughters,[1] who both followed

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv. p. 374; xxii. p. 338.

it. Another priest, hitherto unknown to the Dauphine, was called. He remained a long time with her and administered the last sacraments, which she received with fervour. She then lost consciousness, and seemed gone, when a strong draught recalled her once more to life. "Madame, you are going to God," whispered her old friend in a voice broken by sobs. "Yes, my aunt," were the last words the dying woman was heard to murmur. Louis XIV. was there and received the last breath of the lovely young being who had been the light of his eyes. He was broken-hearted, and so was Madame de Maintenon. She had no strength left to write to Madrid herself. Madame de Caylus had to do it for her. In April only she spoke of the tragedy in a letter to the Duc de Noailles, which contains strange-sounding words: "To the end of my life I shall not cease to lament the loss of the Dauphine, but every day I hear things which make me fear that she would have given me cause for great sorrow. God, in His mercy, recalled her to Himself."[1]

Contemporary memoirs again speak of imprudences, *des entraînements*. The fact that another priest than the usual confessor of the Princess had attended her on her deathbed could not fail to be commented upon. Her memory, however, was worshipped and life at Versailles became extinct without her. At Marly the King saw the Dauphin and was terrified at his looks. They embraced each other in silence; the Prince declined all attempts to comfort him in his grief and insisted on working several hours with Torcy on the morning after his wife's death. It was his last effort, for he was in high fever and his face was already marked with red spots. He knew that the hand of death was upon him and told his friends that he was glad to go. His last days were spent in prayer

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 307.

and meditation; on February 18 he passed away without a word of farewell or a sigh of regret for the world over which his soul had triumphed. Elisabeth Charlotte describes his end as that of the just. She recalls how he sold his mother's jewels to help poor wounded officers, how he had done all the good in his power, and never wronged anybody. Louis XIV., who was unwell, did not see him die, and burnt with his own hands Beauvillier's and Fénelon's letters, which were found in the Prince's desk. Madame de Maintenon, who was not ignorant of their contents, deplored their loss; she saved copies of them, and quoted to Beauvillier the scriptural words, "The righteous will never be confounded."[1]

The vault at Saint-Denis was not closed when the Dauphin's eldest surviving son, a little boy of five, followed his parents on March 8. An infant boy, the last of his family, who lay dangerously ill too, was saved by his nurses' stubborn resistance to the murderous treatment proposed by the faculty. This child reigned over France as Louis XV.

Another catastrophe followed in 1714. The amiable, insignificant Duc de Berry, whose bright and joyous disposition contrasted with the seriousness of his two brothers, sank to an early grave without leaving issue.

Elisabeth Charlotte, who had accused others of poisoning, heard to her horror that her own son was accused of the like crimes, which, in his case, would have paved the way to the throne.

Louis XIV. was appealed to; the Duke himself asked for an inquest, which the monarch refused. In the universal feverish excitement the King alone did not lose his self-possession. He fulfilled his royal duties with a fortitude which filled men like the Venetian ambassador with admiring astonishment.

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 302.

The hand of God was upon him, said Louis, his punishment was deserved. His tears flowed in Madame de Maintenon's presence, but no one else ever saw him faltering.[1]

Another man's heart was mortally hit. Fénelon's lifework was destroyed; no hope survived for a reign of Justice to come, for a Reform from above, under the sway of a true Christian and a model king: "I am overcome with horror, and sick to death without an illness," wrote the Archbishop when he heard that the Dauphin was no more. All his links were broken; there was nothing to bind him to the earth. A few months after his beloved pupil he lost Chevreuse, and Beauvillier followed soon afterwards. Fénelon talked to the dead and did not feel that he had lost them. Yet a last flame burnt in his desolate soul: it was the love of France. The Duc d'Orléans, a dissolute cynic, was the last stay of the dynasty, the only possible Regent after Louis XIV. His sympathies for Fénelon never wavered: "Should I ever be called to govern," he once said to Saint-Simon, "my first courier would be despatched to Cambrai to fetch this prelate and ask him to govern with me."[2] After the Dauphin's death they corresponded on religious subjects, and Fénelon tried to convert "the libertine" to Christianity. But Fénelon died before the King, and the Duc d'Orléans reigned with Cardinal Dubois!

The ideal of a Christian Commonwealth—based on unity of faith within the Church and a consultative system of government in a chiefly agricultural State—vanished with the Dauphin. The answer to the question whether his reign could have prevented the Revolution, is shrouded in mystery.

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. 304; Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, viii. p. 468.
[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xix. p. 209.

The year of his death is the birth year of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The intellectual author of 1789 accomplished what the Monarchy failed to undertake, and Physiocrats and Humanitarians of another age remembered Fénelon and glorified his name.

Louis XIV. had one surviving grandson, the King of Spain. His heroic wife was also mortally ill, and fought against her impending doom as she had fought for his crown. Madame de Maintenon's letters from 1710 are chiefly concerned with the poor Queen's failing health. Madame des Ursins herself spoke of doctors and treatments more than of politics, and the two friends exchanged evil tidings. In 1714 the Queen died; she was but little regretted by a husband who was unable to fathom the extent of his loss and could not do without a wife. Madame de Maintenon did not doubt that Madame des Ursins would now leave Spain.[1] At Utrecht, plenipotentiaries were busy with the Princess's claim to a principality in Belgium as the reward due for the services she had rendered at Madrid. But Madame de Maintenon was wrong: Madame des Ursins was not prepared to leave Spain; she was so powerful with the King that people believed in the possibility of a marriage between the monarch who was not thirty and the Camarera-mayor, who might have been his grandmother. Such an enormity being out of the question, Madame des Ursins resolved to marry the King to somebody else as quickly as possible. A new man had entered the scene at Madrid—Alberoni, an Italian priest, who had acted as agent of the Duke of Parma and become a favourite of Vendôme. The Marshal took Alberoni with him to Flanders, then to Spain, where he stayed after Vendôme's return to France. Alberoni ingratiated himself at Court and convinced Madame des Ursins, who trusted

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 347, 352, 359, 362, 370.

him entirely, that the Duke of Parma's daughter was the person destined to take the late Queen's place. Alberoni made himself answerable for her subserviency to Madame des Ursins, and she consented to the marriage.[1] When the new Queen arrived at the Spanish frontier, the Princess went out to meet her in state, and their first interview was the last and only one they ever had. The Queen merely looked at her, and objected immediately to her dress and to the way in which she behaved to her. The Princess answered in the most respectful and deferential tone, and tried to explain that everything she had done was correct and in perfect accordance with Spanish etiquette. To her speechless stupefaction, the Queen called her insolent, would not listen for a moment to her explanations, and produced out of her pocket a letter from Philip V. which Alberoni had induced him to send. He gave his wife full powers to take measures against the Princess, who was forthwith packed into a carriage and sent out of Spain under military escort. The winter night, during which she had to travel without attendants or luggage, was bitterly cold, and she had time to meditate over one of the most treacherous examples of royal ingratitude ever recorded in history. Even this catastrophe did not overcome her. She remained dignified and self-collected, and did not lower herself by word or deed.

To Madame de Maintenon her fall came as a complete surprise. The Marquise described the sorrow and painful astonishment of their friends, and her own grief when the news reached them that the Princess "had been treated like a criminal." Yet another disappointment was in store for her at Versailles. Her enemies, the Duc d'Orléans, his mother, an equally

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, v. pp. 158, 181, et Mars 1714.

hostile cabal, and Philip's communications to his grandfather predisposed the latter against her. Nothing was obtainable but a farewell audience at Versailles and a pension from the King. Madame de Maintenon frankly told the Princess that it would be best for her to leave France without further delay. She continued to correspond with her from time to time, and they did not become estranged. Madame des Ursins finally retired to Rome, where the exiled Stuarts entered into close relations with her. The keen interest with which she never ceased to watch events in Europe was mingled with humour. She looked with impartial stoicism at the grand world-comedy in which she had played so conspicuous a part, and died an octogenarian in 1722.

Religious questions as such had no attraction for her. "We have more serious affairs to transact," she used to say to Madame de Maintenon, when this lady complained to her of her ecclesiastical troubles. "Wait for the conclusion of the general peace before you knock your caps off your heads," she added unceremoniously enough. But Madame de Maintenon had but one purpose. Politics were forced upon her; the government of the Church was her own domain. The conviction that she was responsible for the orthodoxy of France, no less than for the King's salvation, had grown upon her in her old age. The enemies of both were the heretics, and the one damnable heresy was Jansenism. She had deprived herself of her most powerful ally when she parted with Fénelon and she had done so for the sake of maintaining her influence over the King and her prestige at Rome. But the French Church had to be governed, and an instrument was necessary for the purpose. Madame de Maintenon chose Noailles. She relied upon him with the same implicit faith which dictated her religious beliefs. For years she admonished him to be

CALIFORNIA

CARDINAL DE NOAILLES

firm and not to give rise to the slightest suspicion that he was inclined to leniency towards "the sect." She pressed him so hard that he wanted to retire, and she had to implore him in 1702 not to carry out his intention of resigning his archbishopric.[1] She did not know that he had compromised himself in favour of Jansenist doctrines even before he was called to the seat of Paris. The crisis took her by surprise, and then only did she fully realise the truth. She thereupon broke with him as she had broken with Fénelon, and her last great battle against the Jansenists was fought without Noailles.

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 260, 274, notes pp. 387–388; v., Letters to Noailles, 1702 ff.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST STRUGGLE AGAINST JANSENISM—THE DESTRUCTION OF PORT ROYAL, 1709—THE BULL UNIGENITUS, 1713

In her youth Madame de Maintenon had witnessed a great religious revival, in her old age she saw all the symptoms of a no less great religious decay. All those who had a right to speak agree on the subject. Madame de Maintenon says that even men who were believers in their hearts affected unbelief "pour faire le grand homme," in surroundings where it was the fashion to do so. In 1696 Leibniz, who knew both France and England, wrote the significant words: "It would be well indeed if everybody were at least a Deist, and therefore convinced that everything is governed by a supreme wisdom." The mildest of the Port-Royalists, Nicole, says at about the same time: "The great heresy of the world is not Calvinism or Lutheranism, it is Atheism. There are unbelievers of every description, sincere ones, hypocrites, people who succumb to temptation, resolute and vacillating atheists. . . . The great evil of the day is unbelief." Bossuet foresaw that libertines and free-thinkers would be discredited, not because their principles inspired horror, but because people would become indifferent to everything except their pleasure and their advantage.[1]

Elisabeth Charlotte has often been mentioned in

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 303; Nicole, *Lettres*, lettre xlv., et vi. *Nouvelles Lettres;* Bossuet, *Sermon sur la Divinité de la Religion.*

this narrative. Her hatreds and her prejudices hopelessly bias her judgments on individuals, but her sound common sense is to be trusted whenever personal animosities do not come into play. Catholic practices were not congenial to her; she preferred reading the Scriptures to listening to sermons, but she did not underrate the spirit of French Catholicism. There are curious passages in her correspondence with her German relations. "You must not think," she wrote to one of them in 1701, "that French Catholics are as foolish as German Catholics; they are so different from each other that you might consider them to be of another religion. Whoever wants to do so is free to read the holy Scriptures. Nobody is obliged to believe in trifles or insipid miracles. The Pope is not held to be infallible; when he excommunicated Monsieur de Lavardin, at Rome,[1] people laughed at him. He is not worshipped; pilgrimages and other things of that kind are not popular, as they are in Germany, Spain, or Italy."[2] At the same time Elisabeth Charlotte perceived the dangers of the King's bigotry, and how he tried to make up for the scandals of his past life by working out his salvation at the expense of others. She herself wanted no coercive measures. Personal experience and her friendship for Leibniz had taught her tolerance. But she had evidently not read him when she asked with astounding simplicity: "Why should not the three Christian religions be united into one in conformity with the Gospel and without distinction of Churches? The one important thing is the teaching of a better morality."[3] Her complaints about the increasing wickedness of the world, however, bear the mark of exaggeration.

[1] French ambassador in Rome.

[2] W. L. Holland, *Briefe der Herzogin Elisabeth Charlotte v. Orléans*, Bibl. des lit., Vereins in Stuttgart, vol. lxxxviii. pp. 247, 382.

[3] W. L. Holland, *Briefe*, &c., *loc. cit.*, vol. cxxxii. p. 170; Brunet, *Lettres*, &c., i. pp. 201, 202.

There is ample proof in memoirs and other contemporary writings that morals had certainly not improved. Yet there is no evidence whatever that they were in a worse condition at the end than at the beginning of the reign. The names of Conti, Vendôme and Elisabeth Charlotte's own son were connected with the same abominable scandals as those of Monsieur, of the Chevalier de Lorraine, and many others. Religion had no hold over men of that stamp, and it became discredited in the eyes of a new generation by the controversies of churchmen. Elisabeth Charlotte quotes the lines—

> "Dans ces combats, où nos prélats de France
> Semblent chercher la vérité,
> L'un dit qu'on détruit l'espérance,
> L'autre se plaint que c'est la charité,
> C'est la foi qu'on détruit et personne n'y pense." [1]

For a time Quietism absorbed the interest of schoolmen and partisans, but Jansenism was by no means extinct, and Jansenists had found another chief. It was Pasquier Quesnel, born in 1634. He entered the society of priests of the Oratory in 1657, became a very distinguished theologian, and published in 1671 a devotional commentary, *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament*. The book was widely read among the laity, and went through several editions. In 1685 Quesnel joined Arnauld in his voluntary exile at Brussels, and after his death, in 1694, he secretly assumed the leadership of the party. In the meantime his book had been approved by various bishops, amongst others by Noailles' predecessor at Châlons. In 1695 Noailles himself did the same in a pastoral letter in which he praised the second part of the *Réflexions morales* on the Acts and Epistles, and

[1] Brunet, *Correspondance de la duchesse d'Orléans*, i. p. 24; ii. p. 128, note 2; Ranke, *Briefe*, &c.; *Franz. Geschichte*, v. pp. 365, 368, 372.

recommended the book itself to his flock.[1] La Chaize had it on his writing-table, and used to say that "he liked good words wherever he found them."[2]

In 1687–1688, and again in 1700, the Jesuits suffered signal defeats in France as well as in Rome. Madame de Maintenon's friends, Bossuet, Noailles, Godet and Le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims, were all-powerful in the Assembly of the Clergy of 1700, which issued decrees against the moral teaching of the Jesuits. Bossuet called their doctrine—that the love of God was not essential to salvation—the greatest heresy of the age. His last days, so he wrote to Noailles, would be devoted to fighting against it.[3]

The Jesuits were further accused of sanctioning idolatrous ceremonies and granting to infidels the most far-reaching concessions in order to promote their missionary work, particularly in China. A book written in their defence by Father Le Tellier was put on the Index, and the "Chinese ceremonials" were repeatedly condemned by Rome. La Chaize complained to Oliva, the General of his society, that it suffered the persecution of contempt, and Oliva himself wrote to Louis XIV. that there were bishops who excluded Jesuits from the confessional, and that the King's honour required the vindication of men who were his confessors and those of so many other princes.[4]

Innocent XII. was also no friend of the society. He proved most lenient to the Jansenists, asked for no explanations from them, praised Quesnel, and was

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xx. note 7, p. 336; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 260, note.

[2] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xvii. pp. 47, 48.

[3] J. v. Döllinger, *Die einflussreichste Frau der französischen Geschichte*, Aufsätze, i. p. 400; Bossuet, *Œuvres*, ed. de Versailles, xxxviii. p. 59.

[4] Chantelauze, *Le Père de la Chaise*, p. 84; G. P. Oliva, *Lettere*, ii. p. 129.

called by him "an angel of peace."[1] The so-called "Peace of the Church," which imposed silence on the contending parties, was still valid. In the nineties the Jesuits broke it; virulent anonymous pamphlets were hurled against "the heresy," so that Quesnel appealed to Rome and asked for the punishment of the aggressors. Their tactics were most unwelcome to the Pontiff and most agreeable to the King, upon whom the Jesuits could count in their endeavours to recover their lost credit by renewing their attacks against Jansenism. Louis XIV. had never altered his mind on the subject since the days when Mazarin had taught him "not to tolerate even the name of the sect." "The King does not allow associations, *des ralliements*," said Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, in 1679, to the Abbess of Port-Royal, when he signified to her that the monastery was doomed to extinction. "A corporation without a head is always a danger in a State. The King won't have it; he does not want always to hear about 'Ces messieurs, ces messieurs de Port-Royal.'" Louis XIV. ordered their dispersion. The most famous of them, Nicole and Tillemont, died shortly after Arnauld, but Jansenism still survived at Court, among the secular clergy, the religious congregations, in the schools of theology, in the Church and in the world.

Noailles had no sooner become Archbishop of Paris than he was suspected of Jansenism; he did not like the Jesuits, who on their side retaliated by declaring war against him, but Madame de Maintenon entreated him not to fear them, "as they had never been as weak as they were now."[2] Yet she incessantly reminded him of the duty of belonging to no party, keeping a middle course between the extremes

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 153; iii. pp. 92, 573; F. Rocquain, *L'esprit revolutionnaire*, &c., Introduction, p. vii.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 94, 109, 154, 270, 310, 386–391; v. Dernières Lettres à Noailles.

which were so attractive to others; and, above all, of giving pledges of his orthodoxy by consenting to no compromise with regard to Jansenism.

Godet, her spiritual adviser, had found Quesnel's *Reflexions morales* full of heresies, and wanted Noailles to condemn the book.[1] The Archbishop would not flatly contradict himself, but he published a pastoral letter against another book attributed to Quesnel and containing a vindication of Saint-Cyran's doctrine.[2] "Whom are we to believe?" retorted anonymous writers; "the Bishop of Châlons or the Archbishop of Paris?"[3] Happily for Noailles, Bossuet was still alive and came to the rescue. He appealed to the authority of St. Augustine, gave up those parts of Quesnel's book which he did not find in accordance with his teaching, but stood up for its moral doctrine. Bossuet's next and last appeal for peace was not published till after his death, in 1710, when peace had become impossible. In 1700 Innocent XII. gave the purple to Noailles. The Pontiff died in the same year, and Clement XI. succeeded him. In 1701 Fénelon entered the lists. The glorious humility of his submission had increased his fame, and he now had great influence at Rome. Bossuet and Noailles, "who had tried to strangle him," were also the adversaries of the Jesuits, and he and they had one common enemy, Jansenism. Fénelon promised the Jesuits his support. He could rely on Saint-Sulpice, on Beauvillier and Chevreuse, and on the Duc de Bourgogne. "For Heaven's sake, don't let him escape us," he wrote to Beauvillier. "If La Chaize takes care of one part of the episcopate and Madame de Maintenon of the other, everything will be well."[4]

[1] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 413.
[2] *Traité de la Grâce et de la Prédestination.*
[3] *Problème ecclesiastique proposé à M. l'Abbé Boileau de l'archevêché: A qui l'on doit croire*, &c.; Dangeau, *Journal*, vii. p. 10.
[4] Fénelon, *Correspondance*, i. pp. 460–470; ii. p. 508 ff.

In 1704 Bossuet's voice was silenced for ever. Madame de Maintenon had him replaced by Bissy, a narrow-minded fanatic, who became a cardinal and did the greatest harm. Fénelon's policy did not neglect Philip V. of Spain. Madame des Ursins could not be trusted; she tried to introduce Gallican maxims, advised Philip to abolish the Inquisition, and menaced the Pope,[1] but she had not yet been able to get rid of the King's Jesuit confessor, Daubenton; and Daubenton was entirely reliable. He hated the Jansenists and watched over Philip's orthodoxy.

With Bossuet's death, the feeble, well-meaning Noailles lost his pilot soon after the outbreak of the storm in which he was destined to perish.

The doctors of the Sorbonne had been privately consulted on behalf of a timorous priest, who wanted to know whether he could absolve a penitent who received the papal constitutions about the *Augustinus* in respectful silence only. Forty doctors answered in the affirmative.[2] In 1702 this confidential document, *Le Cas de Conscience*, got into print, and was published.

The whole controversy, silenced in 1668, was now revived, upon which Noailles wished to retire. Although Madame de Maintenon warned him of the King's growing displeasure,[3] he did nothing against the *Cas de Conscience* until Clement XI. condemned "the respectful silence" in 1703.

Noailles then hastened to publish a pastoral letter, in which he too censured the *Cas de Conscience*, but at the same time blamed the imprudent zeal of the

[1] P. Baudrillart, *Philippe V.*, &c., i. pp. 302–318, 561, 574, 576; Rambuteau, *Mémoires de Tessé*, pp. 301–302; Combes, *La Princesse des Ursins*, pp. 281–283.

[2] Daguesseau, *Œuvres*, xiii. pp. 200–201; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. pp. 168–171; Reuchlin, *Der Jansenismus:* in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*, &c., xv. p. 596.

[3] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 386–391.

unknown authors of its publication.[1] His conciliatory tone satisfied nobody; nineteen bishops condemned the *Cas de Conscience*, and, with one exception, the forty doctors who had approved of it changed their minds, and agreed with the bishops. Fénelon improved the occasion, and fulminated a pastoral letter against Jansenism as a whole. By order of the King of Spain, Quesnel was imprisoned at Brussels; his papers were confiscated and sent to Versailles. In a letter, written in 1717, Madame de Maintenon says: "I believe that the Jesuits have Father Quesnel's papers which were sent here by the Archbishop of Malines;[2] they handed them to the King in separate sheets, and for ten years I have spent my evenings reading them. They reveal the most dangerous intrigues, and the beginnings of everything which we see to-day; all this iniquity has been prepared for ever so long."[3]

Denunciations became the rule at Versailles, and proved fatal to all those whose names happened to be mentioned in Quesnel's papers. "A Jansenist," said D'Harcourt, "is in most cases merely a man whom people want to get rid of at Court." The Duc d'Orléans spoke one day to the King on behalf of one of his protégés. "But he is a Jansenist," remarked Louis XIV. "Oh no; he is an Atheist," answered the Duke; and his candidate was appointed.[4]

A priest of the Oratory, Father La Tour, who was supected of Jansenism, had won a great and well-deserved reputation as a spiritual guide, and had a number of penitents. Among them was Madame de Caylus, who, for a time, led a most edifying and austere life. But La Tour used to give her

[1] Daguesseau, *Œuvres*, xiii. p. 203; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 171.
[2] Gachard, *La Belgique sous Philippe V.*, p. 42.
[3] Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. 5 avril 1717.
[4] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xiv. p. 301; xxii. p. 68.

Jansenist books, and from that moment Madame de Maintenon spoke of her conversion as the result of spiritual pride: "You were never devout; your real object is to get married again," she told her, and insisted on the necessity of her giving up La Tour.[1] Madame de Caylus finally obeyed, and was rewarded for her submission by the King. She returned to Versailles, but also, says Saint-Simon, to her old lover, Villeroy, who was now a married man. In any case, her ideals were gone, and one of the most enchanting women of her generation speaks in a somewhat bitter tone of Madame de Maintenon.

The King, however, was not satisfied with the results of the brief of 1703. He had cruelly repressed the revolt of the Protestants in the Cévennes, and neither Bossuet nor Chevreuse and Noailles were listened to when they recommended him to use persuasion instead of force against the vanquished Camisards. In return for this new victory over Protestantism, Louis XIV. asked for a Bull against Jansenism, and so did Madame de Maintenon. The Pope hesitated and only gave way after the King had made himself answerable for its unconditional acceptance in France.[2]

Gallican liberties and usages made the validity of papal decisions dependent on their sanction by the whole Church; and, further, no papal decree could be published in the realm without its being registered by the *Parlement*. In 1705 the Bull, *Vincam Domini*, appeared. It repeated in vague and general terms the condemnations against *Augustinus* and the "respectful silence." The Assembly of the Clergy and the *Parlement* accepted it, but with reservations and

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xii. p. 159, note 1; xii. pp. 331–407; xiv. p. 276; Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 390; v. pp. 304, 319–320.

[2] Daguesseau, *Œuvres*, xiii. p. 254 ff.; A. le Roy, *La France et Rome*, chap. v. pp. 161–234.

clauses which, they contended, were rendered necessary by the obscurities of the text.

The Pope, who had been promised obedience, complained of having been deceived, and the controversy continued. In July 1708 the Roman Inquisition condemned Quesnel's *Reflexions morales.* The tribunal was detested in France, where its decisions had no effect. Two members of the King's Council, Torcy and Pontchartrain, and one of his chief magistrates, Daguesseau, prohibited the publication of the sentence, and from that moment Jansenists and Gallicans combined and formed a coalition, the outcome of which was the opposition of Parliamentarians to the Crown. It is one of the dominating features in French history between 1709 and 1789, and the last representatives of this political and Gallican Jansenism survived in the *Constituante.*

Noailles and many others protested that they had nothing in common with the doctrine of Saint-Cyran.[1] But Noailles maintained that it was the King's cause which he defended by asserting his episcopal rights against foreign aggression, and he refused to receive the decrees. Yet he never intended any revolt against the Pope, to whom he sent assurances of loyalty and obedience. But Fénelon's influence was now predominant at Rome, "which had to be encouraged," he said;[2] and Louis XIV. disapproved strongly of his Archbishop's opposition. Yet Noailles had means of conciliating the King.

His profound aversion for Port-Royal was well known. Twenty-two elderly nuns were its last inmates, but the doomed monastery was still the sanctuary of the persecuted. The King's surgeon, Maréchal,

[1] Depping, *Correspondance administrative du règne de Louis XIV.*, iv. pp. 267–279; Lettre de Noailles, 1708.

[2] Fénelon, *Mémoire adressé au Cardinal Gabrielli*, 1705; F. Brunetière, *Études critiques*, iv. p. 157.

having been asked to perform an operation on one of the nuns, Louis gave him permission to do so and asked him to report about everything which was going on there. Maréchal's impressions were most favourable. "They are saints who have been too harshly treated," observed the King.[1] They were always in his thoughts. On January 20, 1709, La Chaize died. Madame de Maintenon had spoken of him for years as of a man whose mind was enfeebled,[2] and she never did justice to his kindness of heart and moderation. On his death-bed he mentioned the name of Le Tellier to Louis XIV. as one of those best fitted to succeed him. He became the King's confessor four weeks later. "Le Tellier is of low extraction," wrote Madame de Maintenon, "but everybody praises him, that is to say, those who know him, for he has always led a secluded and studious existence."[3] He was hard to himself and to others, "a terrible man," whose violence frightened the Jesuits themselves. Saint-Simon's repulsive portrait of Le Tellier is pitilessly cruel, but the mild and impartial biographer of Fénelon, Cardinal Beausset, also calls this Jesuit "universally detested" and corroborates the fact that Fénelon and he were inseparably united.

In the same year (1709) Godet de Marais, Bishop of Chartres, also died. His virtues and his charity had endeared him to all those who knew him. The bishops chosen by Madame de Maintenon were, as a rule, good and pious men. La Chétardie, who succeeded Godet as her confessor, was no exception to this rule. Saint-Simon calls this parish priest of Saint-Sulpice "un imbécile," but speaks of his saintliness.[4]

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xi. pp. 105–108.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. pp. 107, 388–389.

[3] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 201; Bliard, *Le Père Le Tellier;* Beausset, *Vie de Fénelon*, iii. p. 535 ff.; Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xviii. pp. xx., 330 ff.

[4] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xviii. p. 240.

The management of Church affairs was now in Le Tellier's hands.

In 1706 the King had ordered Noailles to exact from the nuns of Port-Royal the signature of the Bull of 1705. Noailles liked the nuns, he admired their virtues and in 1688 had vainly tried to obtain the King's permission for them once more to receive novices.

Although he knew that the real object of the King's order was the destruction of Port-Royal,[1] he obeyed and asked them to sign. The old spirit was not extinct. From Holland Quesnel, who had escaped from his prison, encouraged the nuns to resist, and they declared that they would only sign if they could do so "without derogating from what had been settled with regard to them in the Peace of the Church by Pope Clement IX."[2] Noailles argued and entreated; finally he gave them up and excommunicated them on November 22, 1707. They appealed to the Archbishop of Lyons, Primate of the Gauls, who annulled Noailles' sentence in April 1708.[3]

The King had found Noailles slow to act, and he himself now solicited and obtained a papal Bull for the suppression of Port-Royal. Noailles then decreed its extinction, and at that very moment Le Tellier appeared on the scene at Versailles. On October 29, 1709, at dead of night, the lieutenant of police, D'Argenson, and his soldiers surrounded the abbey, seized the helpless old nuns, carried them away and brought them under military escort, like criminals, to different convents, where they ended their days without seeing each other again.

Horrible profanations were committed at Port-

[1] "Le dessein que le roi a de les détruire était pris dès longtemps," Saint-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 189.

[2] Saint-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 183.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xviii. pp. 272, 286, App. viii. pp. 280, 471, note 6; Saint-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 182 ff.; A. le Roy, *France et Rome de* 1700 *à* 1715, chap. vi. pp. 161–234, 279–287.

Royal. By order of Louis XIV. the church and the monastery were levelled to the ground. The spot where so many holy men and women had spent their lives in God's service, where so many tears had been shed, so many prayers uttered, so many good deeds performed, became a heap of ruins. The tombs were violated of those whose dying wish had been to rest in the beloved solitude which was dearer to them than a mother's embrace. The bones of the dead were thrown about; bodies recently buried were unearthed by a brutal and drunken soldiery and made the prey of famished dogs. Even worse things happened. Very few remains were identified and decently buried in other churches and cemeteries.[1]

Such deeds were done a few miles from Versailles. Noailles was horrified, and he protested that he had known nothing; even Fénelon foretold that pity for the victims and indignation against the persecutors would provoke a reaction. Saint-Simon says that La Chaize would never have consented to the destruction of Port-Royal. Madame de Maintenon was one of the first persons who heard about it. She wrote to Marshal Villeroy "that she had taken preventive measures in the interests of the persons connected with these affairs."[2]

The constraint of her language is unusual, yet nothing on her part indicates shame and horror at these abominations. She too could not forget Port-Royal: "Did you experience the peculiar sense of devotion of which people speak when they visit the church of Port-Royal?" she once asked.[3] And before its destruction, she wrote to a friend: "I don't know if one ought to encourage or to moderate the

[1] P. Halais, *Pèlerinages de Port-Royal.*

[2] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv. p. 8, Oct. 1709; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, pp. 288, 364; E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, viii. p. 327 ff.

[3] Saint-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 215.

King's zeal. Who knows if too much severity may not embitter people's minds, lead to revolts, and produce a schism? On the other hand, does God approve of such human prudence and politics when the interests of the Church are concerned? All this perturbs me to an incredible degree. . . . Sometimes I am afraid of losing my senses. I believe that, after my death, people will find my heart torn and dried up like that of Monsieur de Louvois."[1]

It must have been well-nigh a relief to her that Le Tellier did not consult her instead of Beauvillier and Fénelon.

Noailles had sacrificed Port-Royal, but he had not censured Quesnel. Le Tellier was determined to hunt him to death should he refuse to do so. First the Dauphin was induced to ask for Quesnel's condemnation,[2] then Le Tellier penned a declaration against Noailles, which was privately sent to bishops with the request to sign it. The manœuvre was found out; Noailles retaliated by depriving the Jesuits of the right of hearing confessions in his diocese, and by telling the King that Le Tellier was unworthy of his office. Louis XIV. then negotiated again with the Pope, and demanded another Bull, more effective than his last one.

Clement XI. kept the King waiting for two years before he complied with his request. At last he reluctantly consented, and the Bull *Unigenitus* appeared in 1713. Saint-Simon says that this constitution was surreptitiously published at Rome without the Pope's knowledge, in order to prevent him changing his mind.[3] Its authors were Cardinal Fabroni and the Jesuit Daubenton.

Madame des Ursins had got rid of him on her

[1] Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres historiques et édifiantes*, ii. p. 277.
[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 312.
[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xx. p. 340 ff.

return to Spain in 1705. He had been guilty of incessant intrigues, and was even accused of having revealed the King's confession. There is no serious foundation for the story, and obviously Philip himself did not believe it, for he recalled Daubenton in 1716. After his expulsion from Spain, Daubenton went to Rome, and came near to being elected General of the society.[1]

The predecessors of Clement XI. had censured five propositions in Jansen's folios. The Bull *Unigenitus* condemned a hundred and one propositions in Quesnel's book, and went beyond it by censuring the practice of Bible-reading itself. Not only popular opinion, but even theologians, credited it with having condemned St. Augustine and St. Paul as well as Jansenius. Fénelon admits that this interpretation prevailed everywhere. He was a warm admirer of the Bull, he had longed for it, and yet he, the apologist of pure love, now found the proposition censured as heretical, "that neither God nor religion were possible without Love."[2] The famous proposition 91, that "the fear of an unjust excommunication ought never to prevent us from fulfilling our duty" was also condemned:[3] "Unjust, not untrue," explained Father Le Tellier to the exasperated Saint-Simon, who was a Gallican, not a Jansenist, and who was convinced that henceforth the authority of all the sovereigns was threatened. He called the Bull a death-blow to Church and State and the ruin of

[1] Th. Lavallée, *Correspondance générale*, iv. p. 348; Charmel et Marcel, *Le Père André, S.J.;* P. Groslier, *Année littéraire*, No. 18, 1777 (Défense de Daubenton); Moreri, *Dictionnaire*, *Biographie Universelle*, x. p. 157; Belando, *Historia civil de España*, 1740 (Source de Voltaire); La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, ii. pp. 20, 130; iii. pp. 46, 51, 65, 80, 81, 86, 108; Introduction, xvi.

[2] *Bullarium Romanum*, viii. pp. 58, 118 ff.; "Nec Deus nec religio, ubi non est charitas."

[3] *Bullarium*, viii. p. 118; "Excommunicationes injustæ metus nunquam debet nos impedire ab implendo debito nostro."

religion. Cardinal La Trémoille, French ambassador at Rome, had to reassure Louis XIV. himself, and to tell him that Gallican liberties were not menaced, and that nothing was changed with regard to them.[1]

The King made use of coercive measures in order to get the Bull registered by the *Parlement* and received by the Assembly of the Clergy. He was unable to prevent them from saving their consciences by another series of clauses and declarations. Noailles and fifteen other bishops went farther. They declared the Bull *Unigenitus* to be a fatal and illegal act of interference in French Church affairs, and demanded a National Council. The Sorbonne, all the religious orders with the exception of the Franciscans, the French universities, the majority of the clergy, the entire magistracy and two ministers of the King, sided with the fifteen bishops and with Noailles. Fénelon spoke of "a disaster": "The public," he says, "scoffs and jests at the papal decrees, everything has to be recommenced." At Paris a young man of nineteen, whose name was Arouet de Voltaire, published in 1713 his first tragedy. It contained the lines—

> "Les prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense,
> Notre ignorance fait toute leur science."

The Jansenists were now the most popular people in France, and Noailles, whom the King exiled from Versailles, was the nation's favourite, and already schismatic in the eyes of Rome. He tried to save his position by at last condemning Quesnel's *Réflexions morales*, and appealed from the badly informed Pope to the better-informed Pope. Madame de Maintenon mourned over the apostasy of so good a man. Nothing, she said, would ever bring this most deplorable state of things to a satisfactory end.

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 311, 18th Sept. 1713, Madame de Maintenon à Madame des Ursins.

Clement XI. summoned Noailles to Rome. The King, however, refused him permission to leave, because a French dignitary of the Church could not undergo judgment by a foreign tribunal. The Pope then fixed a fortnight's term for Noailles' acceptance of the Bull. If he disobeyed, he was to lose his nationality, to be sentenced according to canon law, and deprived of the purple. Fénelon agreed to this proposal; the King rejected it, and sent a special ambassador to Rome, through whom he made another proposal. By royal declaration the Bull was to be accepted in the realm and by the French Church, and the *Parlement* registered it for the second time, on this occasion without reservations. This being done, a National Council had to be convoked for the purpose of passing judgment upon Noailles and his episcopal colleagues. A letter written by Madame de Maintenon to La Chétardie, her confessor, and dated February 24, 1715, reveals the King's state of mind and her own. "It is true that, up to now, Rome declines the Council. The faction (the Jansenists) seems to be afraid of it. The Cardinal and his partisans are more obstinate than ever. How could my interest for him avail? The entreaties of his King and benefactor, his supplications and his tears after the death of our princes, were unable to move him and to win him back. It is certain that he shortens the days of the monarch, whose heart is divided between the interests of religion and the rights of his kingdom."[1] Elisabeth Charlotte also affirms that "the cursed constitution *Unigenitus* killed the King."[2] He was surrounded by advisers who kept repeating that the welfare of Catholicism and the salvation of souls were committed to his care. He justly prided himself that he it was who had compelled

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 363.
[2] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, ii. 169.

the Pope to exercise supreme power over the Church of France. And yet he would not tolerate for a moment the doctrine which the French abhorred,[1] and which was the only logical result of his Church policy, namely, the Infallibility of the Pope. The only bishop who admitted it, although with certain limitations in favour of a constitutional sovereignty in the Church, was Fénelon, and even he did not venture to say so openly in France,[2] but only conceded the doctrine at Rome, where his Vatican correspondent was the Jesuit Daubenton.

The Pope exerted his power practically. He declared that a French National Council was either not to assemble at all, or, if so, only under the condition that it must be left to him to pronounce the final decisions. The *Parlement* answered with a solemn protest against such an interference, and Louis XIV. informed his magistracy that he would punish their opposition as he had done sixty years before, and send them home. It was too late; death extricated the King from the dilemma.

[1] Floquet, *Bossuet de* 1670–1682, p. 572, Louis XIV. to Cardinal Forbin-Janson, 1697.

[2] Fénelon, *Traité sur l'autorité du souverain Pontife*, 1710, publié en 1820; Viscount St. Cyres, *François de Fénelon*, pp. 245–247.

CHAPTER XIX

THE END—LOUIS XIV., SEPTEMBER 1, 1715—MADAME DE MAINTENON, APRIL 15, 1719

In 1714 Louis XIV. was seventy-five years old and his reign had been the longest recorded in history. He had carried out his resolve to be his own Prime Minister, and since Mazarin's death he had been the only ruler of France. When newly elected Secretaries of State, Chamillart or Voysin, pleaded their inexperience and apologised to the King for referring decisions to him, they were told that their activity was limited to executing his orders. For fifty-five years he daily attended to the business of government. Neither pleasures nor illness and domestic affliction interrupted his task. "It is ingratitude and presumption towards God, injustice and tyranny towards man, to wish to reign without hard work," was his maxim. "What do they mean? Do they think me too old to reign?" he angrily asked in 1714. His methodic tenacity and his mental powers were undiminished, his physical strength was still unbroken, when, after the Duc de Berry's death, he made his will and testament. The document was kept secret. The direct heir to the throne was Louis, Duc d'Anjou, a feeble child of three. The claim of Philip, King of Spain, had solemnly been abandoned by the Treaty of Utrecht. Every attempt to revive it would have been the signal for a renewal of war. A Regency was unavoidable. The prince of the blood nearest to the throne was the Duc d'Orléans. Louis XIV. followed the course

MARÉCHAL VILLARS

indicated by the laws of heredity and by all the traditions of France and nominated him Regent. His abilities were above the common, and Madame de Maintenon was one of those who recognised his intellectual superiority.[1] But his character was deplorable and he was plunged in vice. His unlimited authority would mean a complete reaction against the policy pursued by the King in Church and State. Louis XIV. himself had governed with the aid of four chief Councils. To these Councils he gave enlarged powers and nominated their members. The Regent presided over them, and could not act without them.

In July 1714 the King made a *coup d'état*. He published an edict, registered by the *Parlement*, by which his two illegitimate sons, the Duc du Maine and his brother, the Comte de Toulouse, and their descendants, were to succeed to the crown, in case the direct line should become extinct.

"I am not ignorant," wrote Madame du Maine to Madame de Maintenon, "of the extent to which your tenderness for the Duc du Maine and for my children has contributed to the prodigious favour granted to my family. They will be taught by me to share between us two the tenderness, gratitude, and respect due to one's own mother."[2]

In that same month of July, Philip of Spain sent a special ambassador, Cardinal del Giudice, to Marly and claimed the Regency. Del Giudice was not received by the King, and henceforth Philip had recourse to secret machinations. His principal agent was Prince Cellamare, who became ambassador in 1715. The "legitimists" of those days—Villeroy, D'Harcourt, Tallard, D'Effiat, D'Huxelles and even Villars—sided

[1] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 192.
[2] Général de Piépape, *La duchesse du Maine*, &c., 29 juillet 1714, p. 109 ; *Revue des Questions historiques*, vol. xli. p. 113 ; xlii. pp. 158–160.

with Spain. There are indications that the Duc du Maine and Madame de Maintenon supported the project of Philip's Regency, which would practically have been exercised by Du Maine.[1] The testament of Louis XIV. is dated August 2, 1714. Pontchartrain having found it advisable to retire, Voysin was now Chancellor. He broke his trust, and confidentially informed the Duc d'Orléans of its contents.[2] The King gave France, but not his great-grandson, into D'Orléan's hands. The custody of the young King was given to the Duc du Maine. The inmost thoughts of Louis XIV. were thus revealed. He did not trust his nephew. The man whose reputation was such that he had been accused of poisoning, was not the safe guardian of the child who stood between him and the crown. The Duc du Maine had shown himself incapable in war, but his private life was respectable, he was very intelligent, amiable and attractive; Madame de Maintenon loved him, and the King preferred him to the other members of his family.

In 1710 he said in Du Maine's presence to the Dauphin that it would always be his interest to side with the bastards, because they of all people could most entirely be depended upon.

The Dauphin agreed, remarking that he had always thought so.[3] He might have remembered having been sacrificed to another bastard, Vendôme. But Vendôme was gone too, and Louis XIV., who could not ignore the fact that the Duc du Maine was wanting in energy, had recourse to a last expedient. The royal household's troops were at the disposal of the Duc du Maine. The command of the troops was given to

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 310, note 2; E. Bourgeois, *Le secret du Roi*, pp. 10–14, 37.

[2] Seilhac, *L'Abbé Dubois*, i. p. 139.

[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, xix. p. 521.

Marshal Villeroy, governor of the young King, whose loyalty was beyond suspicion.

In 1715 Madame de Maintenon described herself as "a living skeleton." The King, she said, was astonishing for his age, and she doubted not that she would die before him.[1]

In June his health began to give way, but he continued to transact State affairs and worked daily with his ministers. In August a great change was noticeable in his outward appearance and he complained of a pain in his leg. It was the beginning of gangrene. For days he fought against the disease, and would not alter his habits. He let himself be carried to Madame de Maintenon's apartment and to Court functions; he gave audiences and worked regularly. When his strength utterly failed him, he took to bed, and asked for the last sacraments, which he received with the greatest devotion on August 23. From that moment he prepared himself for death with admirable fortitude, and as calmly as if it were for an ordinary journey. The last farewell, he said, was not so very trying; he found it easy to quit this world. He spoke of the little Dauphin as of "the King," and ordered him to be taken to Vincennes, where the air was so wholesome. This residence having been long uninhabited, he entered into every detail for the child's comfort. He conferred with the Duc d'Orléans, and took leave of him and of the royal family.

Elisabeth Charlotte had often cheered the last sorrowful years of his life. She thought she would die of grief when he told her how she had always been very dear to him, and more so than she thought or knew. When he admonished the princesses to live peaceably and in perfect union with each other, she

[1] La Trémoille, *Fragments de Correspondance*, iv., April, Madame de Maintenon à Madame des Ursins; *Lettres*, ed. Bossange, ii. pp. 316, 363, 381, 383, 440; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 368, juin 1715.

protested, and he smilingly assured her that these words were not intended for her.

Madame de Maintenon did not leave his bedside. He tenderly and repeatedly bade farewell to her. The second time he shed tears and asked if they were alone? "It does not matter if we are not," he observed; "nobody will be astonished or find it strange if parting from you affects me so." It deeply troubled him that he had not provided for her, and he asked what was to become of her. "I am a nobody," she answered; "don't think about me." Nevertheless he recommended her to the Duc d'Orléans, to whom he said that she had been helpful to him in all things and particularly for the salvation of his soul. Her enemies did not refrain from accusing her of having abandoned Louis on his death-bed; but he had asked her to see him no more, because her presence moved him too much. Her young friend and secretary, Mademoiselle d'Aumale, says that she spoke to him of restitutions, and that he replied he had none to make as a private person; with regard to the kingdom, he trusted to God's mercy. He thanked his servants and his courtiers for their faithful services: he was going, the State remained; he hoped they would sometimes remember him. When he blessed the Dauphin, he expressed regret for having cared too much for war and expenditure; his successor was not to follow his example. To Cardinal de Noailles, who had written to him, he sent a last message. He would have liked, he said, to have died in his arms, but he was denied this consolation, because the Cardinal did not accept the Bull. Did he perceive that he himself had gone too far and abused his authority? Certain it is that he reminded the two Cardinals, Bissy and Rohan, who were present, and his confessor, Le Tellier, that he had acted on their advice, and that they were responsible before God if he had done wrong.

On August 29 he lost consciousness, and those present thought him gone.[1] Madame de Maintenon left him and Versailles, "with consummate skill," said her foes; "with supreme tact and dignity," thought her friends. Her last care was to distribute to her servants the things which belonged to her in the rooms she had inhabited; they were provided for, and dismissed, while she went to Saint-Cyr. Next day the King awoke once more from sleep and prayed in a loud voice. The agony lasted till September 1, when he expired at eight o'clock in the morning. The closing scene was worthy of the reign and of one of the grandest and most able representatives which kingship has ever had.

At Saint-Cyr Madame de Maintenon had spent her time in prayer. The first news which reached her after that of the King's death came from Paris. On that very day, September 1, the Duc d'Orléans had torn the will to pieces, assumed the Regency by birthright, and called the Parliamentarians into his councils. The Duc du Maine had not found courage to protest, and had relinquished the guardianship of the young King.

It is not proven that Madame de Maintenon ever had illusions about the result of the King's efforts to rule France from his grave. She distinctly said to Madame de Caylus that she had none.[2] Yet she was hardly prepared for so sudden a revolution.

On September 6 the Duc d'Orléans called upon her at Saint-Cyr. The interview was so remarkable that she inserted an account of it in her will.[3] The Regent fulfilled the late King's dying request, and he evidently did so graciously and generously. "I was well satisfied with everything," she wrote to the

[1] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, i. pp. 189-190.
[2] Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Souvenirs*, 1 janvier 1716.
[3] La Beaumelle, *Mémoires de Madame de Maintenon*, vi. p. 295.

Duc de Noailles, who had become one of the Regent's staunchest adherents. "The conversation was friendly; assurances of perfect goodwill were given, and it was said that I had never asked for so much, which is perfectly true. My friends want to know what the King had given me. I told them what it was."[1] It was a yearly income of forty-eight thousand livres, which, owing to the penury of the treasury, was so irregularly paid, that one day Madame de Maintenon had but six louis d'or in her possession. She did not confide to Noailles but to Mademoiselle d'Aumale the far more decisive part of the conversation: "He (the Duc d'Orléans) told me that nobody had the same interest as he himself in the preservation of the young Prince's (Louis XV.) life; that now he had full authority, and would be happy to hand it over to him and to enjoy the credit and honour of having done so. I answered that, if he had not the insatiable desire to reign, of which he was always accused, this was infinitely more glorious. He replied that, if the young King should die, he would not reign in peace but be at war with Spain. I begged of him not to listen to anything of which people might accuse me in that quarter; that I knew the malice of men; that I had nothing more to say, and wanted only to lead a secluded existence, and that my obligation for the benefits I owed him would suffice to bind me in honour never to do anything against him by word or deed; that I might still be accused of relations in Spain; that all this would be untrue, inasmuch as I would no more concern myself about affairs, otherwise than by praying for the welfare of France."[2]

There is the ring of truth in Mademoiselle d'Aumale's report. Madame de Maintenon evidently

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 376, 378, 385–386.

[2] Languet de Gergy, *Mémoires*, p. 467, Récit de Mademoiselle d'Aumale.

did not deny having interfered in Spain on behalf of Philip. But absolutely no trace is to be found that she ever broke the agreement obviously imposed upon her by the Duc d'Orléans. He was the master; she submitted to the *fait accompli*, and retired from the scene.

The life she organised for herself at Saint-Cyr was very simple, nay, austere. She kept no carriage and was quite content to live in a few rooms, which she furnished, and which were situated on the ground floor of the main building. A cook and a few servants constituted her household, and she declined to receive visitors. She sent word to the Duc de Noailles to postpone their meeting, as nothing but an entire solitude could soothe her grief. Madame des Ursins received a letter in which Madame de Maintenon spoke of the King: "We must bow our heads and bear the trial inflicted upon us. I wish your present condition was as peaceful as my own. I saw the King die like a hero and like a saint; I have exchanged the world, for which I never cared, with the most lovely retreat I ever desired." The superioress of Saint-Cyr records a conversation in which the wife of Louis XIV. unfolded her heart: "The King regretted that he had not made me more happy. He loved me in proportion to his capacity of loving anybody. Men who are not dominated by a passionate feeling are not very tender friends."[1] She had fulfilled her task, and she alone knew the price it had cost her to do so. Peace was welcome. Yet she had to undergo another trial. Elisabeth Charlotte was governed by impulse, and in one of these moods she went to see Madame de Maintenon. "She had every reason for doing it," sneered Saint-Simon, "for to her she owed everything which the King gave her after Monsieur's death." No particulars about the interview are known, but

[1] *Lettres historiques et édifiantes*, ii. p. 456.

Madame's letters abound in insulting expressions on "the 'devil incarnate' who had spent her life deceiving the poor King."[1]

Another German lady, Madame de Maintenon's intimate friend, Madame de Dangeau, was her dearest companion. She was told that her presence was always desired, and that she was more than ever beloved. The widow of James II. was a frequent visitor too. Marshal Villeroy called repeatedly, and with him Madame de Maintenon spoke of the past. Other friends were asked to think of her as one already dead; it would be well, she said, if her very name were not mentioned by them.

The inmates of Saint-Cyr surrounded her with a reverent affection, amounting to worship. Old age had made her talkative; whenever the nuns ventured to put indiscreet questions, she smilingly told them that she had nothing to say on such subjects, but she spoke willingly of the improbable and extraordinary events which had led to her elevation, and made of her, as she firmly believed, the instrument of God's designs. Edifying letters and discourses, addressed by her to priests, to the inmates of Saint-Cyr, and to a few friends, fill many volumes.[2] They show that her opinion about conventual life had not varied and that she still realised the danger of neglecting the essentials of religion for the sake of its outward practices. Her solace was prayer and intercourse with the young. As long as she could, she spent hours daily in their classes, and visited from time to time the sick and poor in the village close to Saint-Cyr. Everything she could spare went to the poor, to pensioners, and to Madame de Caylus, who lived

[1] Brunet, *Correspondance de la Duchesse d'Orléans*, i. pp. 197–198, Nov. 5, 1715.

[2] *Madame de Maintenon à Saint-Cyr*, 3 vols.; *Lettres édifiantes*, &c., 7 vols. 1807; Th. Lavallée, *Lettres historiques et édifiantes*, &c., 2 vols.

entirely at her expense. She liked to have young girls in her rooms, played with them, and gave them lessons. The society of the nuns proved less satisfactory; they did not share the interests which had absorbed her, and she regretted the intellectual intercourse which had been the chief enjoyment of her young days and of which she had been deprived, even at Versailles.[1] Her eyesight having improved, she supplied the want of conversation by applying herself to needlework, and she was very fond of reading. A translation of Xenophon and the *Journal* of Dangeau, are mentioned among the books she preferred, which were chiefly historical works. As early as 1713 she had burnt all the letters addressed to her by Louis XIV. She did not write Memoirs, but she approved of her secretary, Mademoiselle d'Aumale, putting down what she told her.[2] The result was an edifying biography after the pattern of legends of the saints; it introduces no shadows in the picture, ignores transitions, and is psychologically as untrue as such legends generally are. Madame de Caylus drew another and a better likeness of her aunt. She did not forget that Madame de Maintenon was too intelligent by far to be wanting in humour. One day, while looking at the famous carps which were the King's delight at Fontainebleau, she smilingly said: "Elles sont comme moi, elles regrettent leur bourbe."[3]

Her firm resolve to have nothing in common with the world outside Saint-Cyr was not respected by Peter the Great. This barbarian of genius visited Paris in 1717 and wanted to see all the curiosities of France. One of them was Madame de Maintenon,

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 323, 328, 386, 390, 391.

[2] Th. Lavallée, *Lettres hist. et édifiantes*, ii. p. 466; A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. 384: D'Haussonville et Hanotaux, *Cahiers et Souvenirs de Mademoiselle d'Aumale*, 3 vols.: vol. iii. Dernières lettres de Madame de Maintenon à Saint-Cyr.

[3] Madame de Caylus, *Souvenirs*, p. 198.

and he insisted on going to Saint-Cyr. She received him in bed; he asked through an interpreter what was the matter, and she answered that what afflicted her was old age. He seemed not to understand, and drew back her curtains: "You may imagine if he was satisfied!" was her amused remark when describing this most unwelcome visit to Madame des Ursins. She wrote to her at intervals, but found her too frivolous for her taste.

The Duc du Maine one day brought his three children to Saint-Cyr; the visit was short; their grandfather, she remarked, would have been satisfied with them.[1] The Duke and his wife repeated their visits and poured out their grievances. "The Duke's sister (the Regent's wife), you and I," wrote Madame de Maintenon to Madame de Caylus, "are the only persons who love him. His real fault is that he loved the King too much."[2] She found him resigned, not weak; and pitied him all the more because she saw him helpless in the hands of his wife, whom she was never able to influence in any way. Her restless ambition ensnared him in an opposition for which he had none of the aptitudes required in a leader of men, but which served the purpose of his enemies. The princes of the blood and the hostile peers, headed by Saint-Simon, recommended extreme measures to the Regent, who, in 1717, inflicted degradation on the bastards. Madame de Maintenon still hoped that Du Maine would imitate his brother Toulouse and not lose his self-control,[3] but she feared everything from his wife, who was exasperated, and plunged into the conspiracy organised by Alberoni and the Queen of Spain with the object of overthrowing the Duc d'Orléans and proclaiming the Regency of Philip V.

[1] Général de Piépape, *La Duchesse du Maine*, &c., p. 116.

[2] Ibid., pp. 113, 115–117, 162–163.

[3] Madame de Maintenon à Madame de Caylus, 21 juillet, 10 août 1716; 6 juillet 1717.

The enterprise failed lamentably, and the Duc and Duchesse du Maine were arrested on December 29, 1718.

Madame de Maintenon fainted when she first heard of the catastrophe, and did not recover from the shock. "The old hag wanted to govern with the Duc du Maine," Elisabeth Charlotte incessantly repeats; "when he disappointed her, the *chagrin* killed her." The octogenarian's grief expressed itself in the words that she would have preferred lamenting her favourite's death rather than such a deed.[1] She did not live to hear of Du Maine's release from prison; the remainder of his life was spent in retirement and in subjection to the wife who had insulted him in his misfortune. His race became extinct with his two sons.

Madame de Maintenon's loyalty to the Regent increased with the growing conviction that he would solve the religious question. He surpassed her expectations.

His motives were purely political. Convictions he had none, and Fénelon's exhortations had been addressed to a man who did not believe in God. Yet he hesitated before siding with Rome, and at first he did favour the opposition against ultramontane claims. But the alliance with Jansenists, Gallicans, and Parliamentarians would have involved the participation of the *Parlement* in State affairs and the downfall of despotism. Such a change of front would moreover have interfered with the Regent's foreign policy and his family interests. In 1718 he prepared the reconciliation with Philip of Spain; his minister, Dubois, secured the good offices of the King's confessor, Daubenton, who promised, on certain

[1] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. pp. 380, 390, 391, 393; Mademoiselle d'Aumale, *Souvenirs*, iii., Dernières lettres de Madame de Maintenon, pp. 58, 214, 246.

conditions, to marry Philip's heir to the Regent's daughter.[1] In France circumstances were favourable. For many years all the French bishoprics had been in the hands of ultramontanes; the opposition in the clergy and the laity might be overcome if the episcopate proved reliable. The Church, like the State, could be governed from above. The religious question was one of power: for a man of Philip of Orléans' stamp, it had no other meaning whatever.

In 1701 Madame de Maintenon had told Noailles that the Jesuits were weak and need not be feared. In 1715 she said: "The Jesuits govern with limitless power; whether people like it or not, they must take them into account."[2] Le Tellier had triumphed, and she had done her best to help him. In 1718, the Regent's *coup d'état* inaugurated the new policy. He abolished the *Conseils*, and declared war on the *Parlement*, whose opposition was destined to outlast, not only him, but Louis XV. The scandalous Dubois was nominated Prime Minister, he was also made a Cardinal, and succeeded Fénelon at Cambrai.[3]

Saint-Simon, Elisabeth Charlotte, and many others, had complained that, during the last period of the great reign, the Court "sweated hypocrisy." The Regent exacted no such tribute. All he required was outward submission to his will. He consented to the condemnation by Rome of the Archbishop of Paris and of all the opponents to the Bull *Unigenitus* who were henceforth designated by the name of "*Appellants*." The hapless Noailles went through physical and mental tortures which broke his health and spirits. Shortly before he died, in 1728, he gave up the struggle and submitted to the Pope. Parliamen-

[1] Seilhac, *L'Abbé Dubois*, ii. p. 72; Maurepas, *Mémoires*, i. p. 223.
[2] A. Geffroy, *Lettres authentiques*, ii. p. 364.
[3] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, ii. p. 133, &c., &c.

tarians and theologians, sincere Christians and mere politicians fought with relentless energy in a hopeless contest against the united forces of Pope and King. France was filled with suspended priests. At the Sorbonne alone a hundred doctors were deposed; laymen were denounced, persecuted, and deprived of the comforts of religion. It has been truly said that the sacraments were forced upon those who would not receive them, and refused to the souls who longed for them as the supreme blessing of their lives. A whole literature records their sufferings and the pangs of tortured consciences. The orthodoxy prescribed by Dubois and exacted by the Regent became indifferent to the children of the world, and despicable to the indifferent. Religious ideals lost their hold on the mentality and the culture of France.

The reaction against absolutism identified the religion which Port-Royal had put into practice, and which Vincent de Paul, François de Sales and Pascal had glorified, with the caricature of faith which died away in empty controversy and insincere surrender.

Madame de Maintenon had an astonishingly clear perception of the impending doom, the beginnings of which she saw. The dread of a great Revolution was upon her. She tried to stave it off by appealing to force in order to save unity in faith. Those who feel inclined to pass sentence upon her will do well to remember that Bossuet, Fénelon and Arnauld himself, the victims as well as their foes, were all committed to the theory of religious persecution. The notion of tolerance was unknown to the seventeenth century in France. The philosophers of the eighteenth century spoke of it, and yet their doctrine erected the scaffolds of 1793 for those who refused to adopt the religion prescribed by the State: "Everybody who acts as if he did not believe in its dogmas is to be punished with death," so runs the last sentence of

J. J. Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, the Bible of Robespierre. Louis XIV. at his worst had not gone so far. Madame de Maintenon, like Fénelon, recommended mildness towards individuals, although they both agreed in condemning heresy, not only as a revolt against the Church, but as a danger to the State.

Madame de Maintenon's faithful secretary expressly mentions that she had no infirmities.[1] But she often suffered from fever, which recent emotions had increased. In April a fresh attack proved fatal. The end came on April 15, 1719, at five o'clock in the afternoon. She was eighty-four years old. Elisabeth Charlotte says that she died, during a heavy thunderstorm, of measles, "like a young person." The language she makes use of cannot be rendered.[2]

The thought of death had always been present to Madame de Maintenon; she had often expressed astonishment when others dreaded the last passage, which to her had no terrors, and all her worldly affairs were settled. She had asked to be buried in the nun's cemetery, but they laid her to rest in the vault under the choir of their church. The Duc de Noailles charged a literary man, Abbé Vertot, with composing a long and bombastic epitaph, the style of which alone would have revolted her unfailing taste.

The inmates of Saint-Cyr understood her better; they wanted the simple words engraved on her tombstone:

"Ci-gît Madame de Maintenon, Institutrice."

They characterise her inmost self. The strongest and the most genuine impulse in her was the love of children, the passionate longing to be a mother to them.

[1] *Souvenirs*, loc. cit., p. 236.

[2] Brunet, *Correspondance de Madame*, ii. pp. 93–94, &c., &c.

She loved the King's children before, and more intensely than she ever loved him, and thus she conquered his heart. Afterwards she continued to educate generations of young girls and those whose duty it was to educate them.

Her methods have become obsolete; the spirit which inspired them is as lasting as truth itself. Her message to womanhood is the stern call to duty, to quiet, unrelenting, self-sacrificing work in the service of God and of mankind.

The spot which covered her remains has been violated like the tombs of Port-Royal and the vaults of Royal Saint-Denis. Her writings have been falsified, her memory has been calumniated. Men have had recourse to the most extravagant suppositions in order to explain so marvellous a destiny. They seemed to forget that occurrences in real life often baffle the wildest dreams of fancy. It sounds like a fairy tale that the mightiest and most charming sovereign in Europe fell in love with the elderly widow of a not very respectable playwright and made her his wife. She never said so, and carried her secret to the grave. This also was very extraordinary, and, moreover, very grand.

INDEX

AGINCOURT, 115
Alba, Duke of, 228
Alberoni, Cardinal, 274 *seq.*, 306
Albret, Duchesse d', 17, 33
—— Hôtel d', 19, 24, 46, 48
—— Marshal Duc d', 15, 20, 46, 53, 57
Alembert, d', 147
Alexandre VIII,, Pope, 138, 143, 144
Alliance, Grand, 107, 160, 198, 222
Alsace, 53, 70, 159, 217, 225, 229, 249
Amelot, 228, 234 *seq.*, 244, 251
Angers, 3
Anjou, Duc d', 85, 178, 181 *seq.* *See* Philip V. of Spain
—— Duc d', Dauphin, then Louis XV., 296, 299
Annat, Jesuit, 37
Anne of Austria, Queen of France, 6, 11, 17, 23, 179
Anne, Queen of England, 201
Annecy, 29
Antin, Duc d', 111, 172
Antwerp, 57
Arc, Joan of, 170
Argenson, 289
Arnauld, Angélique, Abbess of Port-Royal, 30, 38 *seq.*, 103
—— Antoine, dit le Grand, 33 *seq.*, 38, 93, 101, 104, 280, 282, 308
—— family, 30, 187
—— the father, 30
—— de Pomponne, 104, 110, 286 *seq.*
Aubigné, Agrippa d', 1 *seq.*, 23, 26, 234
—— Charles, Comte d', 3, 6, 17 *seq.*, 50, 53, 66, 73, 83, 168, 169
—— Constant d', Baron de Surimeau, 3, 4
Aubigné, Françoise d'. *See* Scarron et Maintenon
—— Jeanne de Cardilhac, dame d', 2 *seq.*, 12
—— Mademoiselle d', 168. *See* Noailles
Aubigny, d', 209 *seq.*, 226
Augustine, Saint, 31, 44, 126, 283, 292
Augustinus treatise, 32, 33, 35, 286
Aumale, Mademoiselle d', 300, 302, 305
Aunis, 2
Austria, 192, 198, 224
Ayen, Comte d'. *See* Noailles
—— Comtesse d'. *See* Aubigné et Noailles.

BAGNIÈRES, 60
Balbien, Nanon, 23
Balzac, 33
Barbézieux, Marquis de, son of Louvois, 110, 179 *seq.*
Barcelona, 68, 210, 211, 234
Barèges, 57, 58, 60
Barillon, 108
Bavaria, 60, 105, 192, 225
Bâville, 222
Bayonne, 179, 226
Beachy Head, battle of, 109
Beauvillier, Duc de, the elder, 15, 204
—— Duc de, Minister, 117 *seq.*, 125, 137, 138, 140, 147, 165, 174, 179, 180 *seq.*, 199, 213, 217, 221, 237 *seq.*, 240 *seq.*, 248, 261, 272, 273, 283, 286, 291
—— Duchesse de, Colbert's daughter, 118 *seq.*
Belfort, 72
Belgium, 197, 274
Bernhardine Nuns, 30

Berry, Duc de, 84, 165, 178, 182, 240, 243, 246, 272
—— Duchesse de, Princesse d'Orléans, 246, 269, 296
Bérulle, Cardinal de, 29
Berwick, Marshal Duke of, 201, 219, 225, 227, 235 *seq.*, 241
Béthune, Duchesse de, 128
Beuvron, Marquis de, 15, 45, 177
Bezons, Marshal, 254, 256 *seq.*
Bishops, French, 28, 29, 35, 39, 93, 293, 308
Bissy, Cardinal de, 284, 300
Blaye, 57
Blécourt, 178 *seq.*, 253
Blenheim, battle of, 225
Blois, town of, 58
—— Mademoiselle de, daughter of Louis XIV. and Montespan, 111, 155. *See* Orléans, Chartres
Boileau, Gilles, 16
—— the poet, 33, 102
Bois-Guillebert, 189 *seq.*, 191, 248
Boisrobert, 16, 21
Bolingbroke, 259
Bontemps, 75
Bordeaux, 2, 3, 12, 57
Bossuet, Abbé, 143
—— Bishop, 34, 38, 44, 57, 58, 61, 84, 91 *seq.*, 101, 102, 111, 118, 121, 131 *seq.*, 134 *seq.*, 138, 141 *seq.*, 145, 171, 178, 281, 283, 284, 309. *See* Fénelon, Louis XIV.
Boufflers, Marshal Duc de, 158, 159, 170, 201, 216 *seq.*, 219, 241, 244, 247, 250, 254 *seq.*
Bouillon, Cardinal de, 143, 145, 206, 219
—— Duchesse de, 64
Boulainvillier, 171
Bourbon, Duc de, grandson of Condé, 87, 173
—— Duchesse de, 87, 157, 167 *seq.*, 242, 263, 269. *See* Nantes, Mademoiselle de
—— dynasty, 85, 160, 177, 181, 206
Bourdaloue, 35, 56, 124, 132, 139, 145
Bourgogne, Duc de, then Dauphin, 81, 118, 122 *seq.*, 139, 149, 151, 162, 164, 170 *seq.*, 182, 190, 199, 216 *seq.*, 223, 229, 236 *seq.*, 241 *seq.*, 248, 257, 263 *seq.*, 270 *seq.*, 273, 283, 291, 298
Bourgogne, Duchesse de, then Dauphine, 161 *seq.*, 165, 170 *seq.*, 203, 222 *seq.*, 227, 230, 242, 254, 263, 266 *seq.*, 269, 270 *seq.*
Boutillier. *See* Rancé
Boyne, battle of the, 109
Burgos, 109
Burgundy, 72
Burnet, 145
Bussy-Rabutin, Comte de, 21

Cabart de Villermont, 5, 9, 11, 12
Cadiz, 221
Calixt, Bishop, 92
Calvin, 28, 33
Calvinism, 28, 32, 91, 93, 278
Calvinists, 3, 6, 8, 29, 30, 94
Cambrai. *See* Fénelon
Cardilhac. *See* Aubigné, Madame d'
Casale, 91, 160
Casuists, 35, 37, 145
Catalonia, 110, 135, 234 *seq.* 257, 258
Catholics, 8, 279
Catinat, Marshal, 158, 160, 201, 215 *seq.*
Caulet, Bishop, 105
Cayenne, 11, 14
Caylus, Comte de, 101
—— Comtesse de, *née* Villette, 21, 51, 101, 167 *seq.*, 171, 285 *seq.*, 301, 304 *seq.*
Cellamare, Prince of, 297
Cévennes, 223
Chalais, Talleyrand, Prince de, 204, 205
—— Princesse de. *See* Ursins
Châlons, 72, 132, 133
Chambord, Château de, 70, 78
Chamillart, Minister, 186 *seq.*, 213, 216, 219, 228, 232, 237 *seq.*, 241, 243, 244, 248, 250 *seq.*, 296
Chamlay, Marquis de, 110, 158
Champmeslé, 101
Chanterac, Abbé de, 143
Charenton, 128
Charles, Archduke, King of Spain, Pretender, 176 *seq.*, 222, 225, 234 *seq.*, 256, 259
Charles II., King of England, 73, 92, 106, 108
—— King of Spain, 176, 178 *seq.*, 221

Charon, 28
Chartres, 55, 131
—— Duke of. *See* Orléans
Chevreuse, Duc de, 117, 125, 138, 149, 151, 237, 240, 273, 283, 286
—— Duchesse de, fille de Colbert, 18
Chiari, battle of, 215
Choin, Mademoiselle, 85
Choisy, Abbé de, 22, 66, 75, 110
Clagny, Château de, 57
Clement of Bavaria, Archbishop Elector of Cologne, 105
Clement IX., Pope, 39
Clement XI., Albani, Pope, 185, 207, 253, 283, 284, 291 *seq.*, 294
Colbert, Minister, 47, 52, 65, 73, 75, 78, 91, 93, 109, 185, 188
—— de Croissy, Marquis de. *See* Torcy
—— de Seignelay. *See* Seignelay
Compiègne, 112, 169 *seq.*, 171
Concordate of 1516, 32
Condé, the great, 15, 41, 52, 86 *seq.*, 157, 225; his son called Monsieur le Prince, 86
Condom, Bishop of. *See* Bossuet
Conti, Prince de, the elder grandson of Condé, 85, 86
—— Prince de, the younger grandson of Condé, 87, 269, 280
—— Princesse de, daughter of Louis XIV. and La Vallière, 85, 87, 88, 242, 263, 269
Corneille, Pierre, 33, 41, 99
Coulanges, Ambassador, 83
—— Madame de, 51, 68
Coutras, battle of, 2
Crest, 2
Cyrano. *See* Bergerac

DAGUESSEAU, 33, 144, 287
Dangeau, Marquis de, 83, 305
—— Marquise de, 83, 219, 269, 304
Dantzig, 87
Danube, 222, 224 *seq.*
Daubenton, Jesuit, 229, 284, 291 *seq.*, 295, 307
Dauphin, le Grand, called Monseigneur, 49, 60, 81, 84 *seq.*, 93, 151, 158, 165, 178, 180, 183, 238, 242, 247, 248, 262 *seq.*, 264, 265
Dauphine, called de Bavière, 60, 67, 69, 71, 74, 82 *seq.*, 87, 88, 105, 195
Dauphin. *See* Duc de Bourgogne
Dauphine. *See* Duchesse de Bourgogne
Dauphin. *See* Louis XV.
De Lorme, 69
Denain, battle of, 258
De Ruyter, 52
Descartes, 36, 39
Desmaretz, 237, 248, 251, 254 *seq.*
Domat, 33
Dominican, 35
Dover, Treaty of, 106
Dubois, Abbé, 155, 193, 273, 307 *seq.*, 309
Dumont, 115
Dunoyer, Madame, 268
Duquesne, Admiral, 52
Du Vair, 28
Duvergier de Hauranne. *See* Saint Cyran

EFFIAT, d', 297
Elbeuf, Duc d', Prince de Lorraine, 15
Elector of Bavaria, 60, 82, 83, 176 *seq.*, 217, 222, 260
—— of Brandenburg, 94, 192. *See* Prussia
—— of Cologne, 105
—— of Hanover, 192
—— of Saxony, 87
Electress Sophia of Hanover, 156, 166, 196
Elisabeth Charlotte. *See* Orléans
Emperor, German, 256, 258. *See* Leopold
Empire, German, 107, 177
England, 3, 106 *seq.*, 109, 114, 159, 160, 166, 177, 192, 197, 201, 256, 258
Erizzo, Nicolò, 165
Escobar, 37
Estrées, Abbé d', 221
—— Cardinal d', 205, 221
Eugène of Savoy, Prince, 86, 151, 201, 202, 216, 220, 224 *seq.*, 229, 232 *seq.*, 236, 239 *seq.*, 242, 249 *seq.*, 255, 258 *seq.*
Eure, river, 80
Europe, 52, 53, 54, 62, 77, 144, 169, 170, 176
Exeter, Lady, 268

FABRONI, Cardinal, 291
Félix. *See* Tassy
Fénelon, François de Salignac de la Mothe, early years at Saint-Sulpice ; missionary work among Protestants ; friendship with Beauvillier and Chevreuse, 119–121 ; preceptor of the children of France, 118, 122–123 ; friendly relations with Madame de Maintenon, Bossuet, and Madame Guyon, 123, 125, 129 *seq.* ; antagonism to the King, 125–127 ; Archbishop of Cambrai, 133 ; conflict with Bossuet about Quietism, 134 *seq.* ; exiled by the King, 139 ; appeal to Rome and condemnation, 142–146 ; "Letters to the King," 147–148 ; *Télémaque*, 149–151 ; meetings with and influence over the Duc de Bourgogne, 216, 217, 236 *seq.*, 266 ; plans of government, 151, 265, 273 ; and the Duc d'Orléans, 273, 307 ; his violent hostility against Jansenism, 283 *seq.*, 287, 290, 293 *seq.* ; his doctrine teaches Ultramontanism, 121, 143, 295 ; his end, 273 ; otherwise mentioned, 44, 102, 171, 206, 207, 272, 274, 276, 288. *See* Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon
Ferrier, Jesuit, 37
Flanders, 49, 52, 53, 70, 90, 110, 112, 115, 157 *seq.*, 232 *seq.*, 236, 239, 240, 250, 258, 266, 274
Florence, 179, 206
Fontainebleau, Château de, 49, 73, 74, 78, 180, 240, 305
Fontanges, Mademoiselle de, 60, 65 *seq.*, 67, 68
Fontevrault, Rochechouart-Mortemart, Madame de, Abbess of, 58, 64, 112
Fouquet, Madame, 18
—— Minister, 18, 23
Franche-Comté, 53, 70, 249
François de Sales, Saint, 28 *seq.*, 44, 126, 133, 309
Frédéric the Great, 102
Friedlingen, battle of, 218
Fürstenberg, Bishop Prince, 105

GALILEO, 39
Gallicanism, 32, 92, 104, 121, 141, 144, 187, 284, 286, 287
Gallicans, 121, 127, 144, 145, 186, 292, 307
Geneva, 28, 29
Genoese Republic, 106
Germany, 225, 279
Gibraltar, 227
Giudice, Cardinal del, 297
Gobelin, Abbé, 44, 47, 48, 56, 58, 60, 74, 124, 131
Godet des Marais, Bishop of Chartres, 131, 187, 281, 283, 289
Gondrin, widow of, 154. *See* Toulouse
Gondy. *See* Retz
Gonzalez, Jesuit, 35
Grandval, 115, 116
Grignan, Comtesse de, 68. *See* Sévigné
Grotius, 92
Guadeloupe, 5
Guibourg, 63, 65
Guiche, Duc de, 45
Guyenne, or Guiana, 11, 46
Guyon, Jeanne Marie de la Motte, 128 *seq.*, 134 *seq.*, 145, 171. *See* Fénelon, Madame de Maintenon, Bossuet

HABSBURG dynasty, 144, 176 *seq.*
Hague, the, 197, 201, 225, 249, 250, 255
Hanover, 192, 195
Harcourt, Duc d', 177 *seq.*, 183 *seq.*, 188, 208, 213, 251, 285, 297
Harlay de Champvallon, Achille, Archbishop of Paris, 75, 104, 110, 135, 282
Harteloire, Mademoiselle de, 69
Hautefort, Marie de, 9
Heidelberg, 82, 158
Heinsius, 225, 249
Henri IV., King of France, 1, 2, 23, 30, 215
Heudicourt, Madame d', *née* de Pons, 25, 26, 47, 204, 268
Hoechstaedt, battle of, 222
Holland, 19, 49, 50, 53, 104, 149, 192, 197 *seq.*
Huguenots, 92. *See* Protestants, Edict of Nantes.

Hungary, 86, 222
Huxelles, Marshal d', 297

INDIES, 177, 258
Innocent X., Pope, 35
Innocent XI., Odescalchi, Pope, 92, 94, 103 *seq.*, 107 *seq.*, 127, 143
Innocent XII., Pope, 38, 136, 139, 143, 178, 206, 281, 283
Institut de Saint Louis. *See* Saint-Cyr
Ireland, 109
Issy, Commission of, 132 *seq.*
Italy, 105, 160, 177, 202, 214, 215, 222, 224, 233

JAMES II., 100, 106 *seq.*, 114, 159, 165, 198 *seq.*, 225
James III., 199, 240, 259
Jansen, Cornelius (Jansenius), Bishop of Ypres, 31, 32, 36, 38, 292
Jansenism, 34, 35, 38, 42, 43, 105, 145, 276, 282, 285, 286
Jansenists, 34, 36, 44, 92, 129, 187, 277, 281, 283, 285, 292 *seq.*, 307
Jesuits, 5, 35, 37, 38, 44, 92, 101, 104, 107, 114, 121, 126 *seq.*, 136, 139, 145, 147, 173, 207, 229, 270, 281 *seq.*, 288, 291, 308
Jesuits. *See* Annat, Ferrier, Bourdaloue, Daubenton, Gonzalez, La Chaize, Le Tellier, Lugo de, Molina, Oliva

KANT, Imanuel, 265

LA BEAUMELLE, 66, 189
La Bruyère, 33
La Chaize, Jesuit, 37, 67, 90, 101, 126, 138, 139, 145, 164, 281, 283, 288, 290
La Chétardie, 288, 294
La Combe, Père, 128, 141
La Fare, Marquis de, 18 *seq.*, 110
La Fayette, Comtesse de, 50
La Feuillade, Duc de, 219, 232 *seq.*, 234, 251
La Force, 2
La Hougue Saint-Waast, battle of, 115
Languedoc, 87, 154, 223
La Reynie, 63 *seq.*
La Rochelle, 3, 5
La Tour, Father of the Oratory, 285
La Trappe, Monastère de, 30, 200
La Vallière, Louise, Duchesse de, 24, 45, 46, 47, 51, 65, 70, 85, 111, 170
Lavardin, Marquis, 105
Leibniz, 34, 92, 102, 265, 278, 279
Le Mans, 9
Le Nain. *See* Tillemont
Lenclos, Ninon de, 10, 17, 19
Le Nôtre, 79, 80
Leopold, Empereur, 106 *seq.*, 158, 160, 166, 177 *seq.*, 192, 198, 213, 224, 228
Lérida, battle of, 235
Lesdiguières, Duchesse de, 15
Le Tellier, Archbishop of Rheims, 281
—— Chancellor, 52, 93
—— Jesuit, 146, 263, 281, 288 *seq.*, 291 *seq.*, 306, 308
Lille, 241 *seq.*, 243, 244, 249, 251
Lionne, Minister, 52
Lorraine, Chevalier de, 280
—— Duke of, 166, 177
Louis XIII., 2
Louis XIV., nominates Madame Scarron governess of Madame de Montespan's illegitimate children (1668), 47; his affection for them, 49; legitimation of his bastards (1673), 51; his character, 45, 52; achieves the triumph of absolute power (1668–1678), 52, 91; acts as peacemaker between Madame de Montespan and Madame Scarron, 54; gives Madame Scarron the estate of Maintenon (1674), 55; promises Bossuet to give up Madame de Montespan, 57; calls her back, 59; interferes in the "Affaire des Poisons," 63 *seq.*; dismisses his mistresses Montespan and Fontanges (1680), 65–67; his loyal friendship for Madame de Maintenon, 68–69; returns to the Queen, 70, 71; she dies (1683), 72–73; is secretly married to Madame de Maintenon (1684), 74, 75; proves a faithful, loving,

and exacting husband, 75–77; at Versailles, the protector of fine arts, 78 *seq.*; his family, 82 *seq.*; his daily life, 89; his religious training, his Jesuit confessors, 125, 126 (*see* Annat, Ferrier, La Chaize, Le Tellier); assumes the leadership of Gallican Church, 91; in conflict with Pope Innocent XI., 92, 103–107, 127, 143; revocation of the Edict of Nantes and persecution of Protestants, 91–95, 222, 286; enemy of Jansenism, destroys Port-Royal, 92, 282, 284-295, 300; brings about the condemnation of Quietism, 138, 144, 146 (*see* Fénelon, Madame Guyon, Bossuet); surrenders to the Pope, 144; is the founder and protector of Saint-Cyr, 97 *seq.*; ally and friend of the Stuarts, 92, 106 *seq.*, 114, 159, 198 *seq.*, 259; his policy leads to the war of the Grand Alliance (1689–1697), 107, 110, 114 *seq.*, 157 *seq.*; and the peace of Ryswyck (1697), 160; marries the Duc de Bourgogne to Marie Adelaïde of Savoy, 161 *seq.*; assembles his troops in the camp at Compiègne, 169 *seq.*; and the Spanish Succession, 176 *seq.*; accepts the crown of Spain for his grandson, 180 *seq.*; rejects plans of reform, 189–191; commits the faults which lead to the great war of 1701–1713, 197–201; attempts to govern Spain through Madame des Ursins, 220, 228, 235, 245, 257; his armies defeated at Blenheim (1704), 225; at Ramillies (1706), 232; at Turin (1706), 233; at Oudenarde (1708), 240; at Malplaquet (1709), 255; his fortunes redeemed by Vendôme in Spain, 257; and by Villars at Denain (1712), 258; and the Peace of Utrecht (1713), 259; sees his son and his grandchildren die (1711–1714), 262 *seq.*; his fortitude in adversity, 272–273; and the greatness of his end (September 1, 1715), 296 *seq.*; otherwise mentioned, 23, 34, 43, 45, 98, 99, 111, 112, 130, 135, 281, 303, 311

Louise, Hollandine, Princess of the Palatinate, Abbess of Maubuisson, 103, 200

Louise of Parma, Queen of Spain, 275, 306

Louvain, 31, 157

Louville, Marquis de, 180 *seq.*, 202, 209, 213, 221

Louvois, Minister, 50, 52, 63, 65, 73, 75, 90, 91, 93, 101, 109, 117, 151, 160, 170, 186, 188, 219, 291

Louvre, 16

Löwenstein, Sophie de. *See* Danjeau

Lugo, de, Cardinal, 34, 35

Lutherans, 91

Luxembourg, fortress of, 91

—— Marshal Duc de, 52, 64, 112, 115, 157, 158

Luzzara, battle of, 216

Macaulay, 115

Madame. *See* Orléans, Elisabeth Charlotte

Mademoiselle, called la Grande, cousin of Louis XIV., 53, 86

Maestricht, 53

Maine, Duc du, 48, 57 *seq.*, 60, 86, 88, 98, 111, 154, 156, 159, 167, 201, 238, 297 *seq.*, 301, 305, 307

Maine, Duchesse de, Princesse de Bourbon-Condé, 157, 167, 297, 306, 307

Maintenon, Château de, 55, 59, 60, 70, 80

—— Françoise d'Aubigné, wife, then widow of Scarron, Marquise de, her childhood and early youth, 3–11; marries Paul Scarron (1652), 12–13; his circle and her friends, 14–17; deserves the gratitude of her husband, 18; is surrounded by slanderers, 19–22; becomes a widow (1660), 22; is left destitute and pensioned by the King, 23; leads a retired, not a solitary life, 24; her character, 25–26; her religious development and her spiritual advisers, 27, 42 *seq.*, 44 *seq.*, 56 *seq.*, 47,

124, 131, 187, 281, 283, 288 (*see* Abbé Gobelin, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, Godet des Marais, La Chétardie); requests an order from Louis XIV. before taking care of Madame de Montespan's illegitimate children, 47; friendly relations with her, 49, 53; disliked at first by the King, wins his confidence, 50–51; hostility of Madame de Montespan leads to lasting estrangement between the two ladies, 54, 59, 111–112; gets the estate of Maintenon, and is addressed under that name by Louis XIV. (1674), 55; admonishes him to give up Madame de Montespan, 56, 59; her maternal love for the Duc du Maine, 57–58, 86, 88, 154, 157; despairs of the King changing his life, and wants to leave the Court, 60; is nominated Dame d'Atour of the future Dauphine (1680), 61; the King's growing friendship for her, 67; brings him back to the Queen, 70–71; who dies suddenly in 1683, 72; her secret marriage with Louis XIV., most likely in January 1684, 73–75; her devotion to the King and its motives, 76, 77; at Versailles, 82, 88–89; overcomes the prejudices of the Dauphine against her, 85; is on good terms with the Dauphin, 85; not consulted about the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, approves of it, but recommends moderation, 95; creates Saint-Cyr, 97; her views about convents and education of girls, 3, 98–99, 103, 123; induces Racine to write *Esther* and *Athalie*, 99–102; takes up the cause of the Stuarts, 107–108, 115–116, 198–200; and Louvois, 75, 109–110, 219, 291; accompanies the King in his campaigns, 53, 112 *seq.*, 157 *seq.*; her intimacy with the families Beauvillier and Chevreuse, 117; meets Fénelon and is under his charm, 123–125; despises Father La Chaize, 126, 139, 164, 288; and dislikes the Jesuits, 114, 136, 139, 147, 281, 282, 308; inclined towards mysticism, protects Madame Guyon, 128–131, 133; banishes her from Saint-Cyr, 132; hopes to extinguish the controversy about Quietism by making Fénelon Archbishop of Cambrai, 133; and Noailles Archbishop of Paris, 135; her maternal affection for, and trust in, Noailles, 136, 163, 169, 181, 185, 192; sides with Bossuet and Noailles, abandons Fénelon and Madame Guyon, 136 *seq.*; advocates hostile measures against them and the Duc de Beauvillier, 137–141; is threatened with the King's disgrace and pardoned by him, 139–140; her opinion about Fénelon's "Letter to the King" and *Télémaque*, 147, 148, 150; provides for her relations, and is disappointed in them, 17, 50, 60, 167–169, 285–286 (*see* Charles d'Aubigny, Villette, Caylus, Duchesse de Noailles; Mary Adelaïde of Savoy (*see* Duchesse de Bourgogne); maintains a dignified attitude towards her enemy Elisabeth Charlotte (*see* Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans); likes the Duc d'Orléans, the son, 155, 167, 233–234, 244, 246; her active part in politics begins in 1700, 179; consulted by the King about Spanish succession, is against the acceptance, 181, 182; relies on d'Ayen, Noailles, d'Harcourt, 183, 185; Chamillart, gives him instructions, 187, 189, 251; does not expect reforms from Louis XIV., 152, 191, 253; friendship with Madame des Ursins, 203, 207, 208, 211–212, 226, 228–230, 274–275, 276; the two ladies differ about politics, 234, 252 254–255, 257; supports and protects Berwick, Villars, Voysin (*see* references); stands by the Duc de Bourgogne and Villeroy in adversity, 225, 239, 243; com-

forts Louis XIV. in his bereavements, 262 *seq.*; counts upon Noailles in the last struggle against Jansenism, 276–277, 282–284; he wavers, tries a conciliatory policy, and fails, 284 *seq.*; she sacrifices him, 286, 293–294; and Port-Royal, 289–291; sides with the Duc du Maine, 297, 298; and in favour of the Regency for Philip V., 301–303; at the King's death-bed, 299–300; retires to Saint-Cyr, 301–306; counts upon the Regent for the destruction of Jansenism, 307–308, 310; predicts the impending doom, 269–270, 293, 309; her grief at the news of the conspiracy and the arrest of her favourite, the Duc du Maine, 306–307; she welcomes death, 310; her peaceful end, April 15, 1719,
Maintenon, Marquisat de, 55
Maisonfort, Mademoiselle de, 130 *seq.*, 140
Malaga, 227
Malebranche, 121
Malplaquet, battle of, 255
Mancini, Marie, 17
—— Olympia, Comtesse de Soissons, 64
Mansard, 78, 80, 97
Marais, Faubourg du, 14
Marcin, 213, 225, 233
Maréchal, 287 *seq.*
Maria Theresa, Empress, 166
Marie Adelaïde of Savoy. *See* Duchesse de Bourgogne
Marie-Galante, Island of, 4 *seq.*
Marie Louise of Savoy, Queen of Spain, 202, 208, 210, 220, 226, 228, 234 *seq.*, 244, 256, 274
Marie Therese, Queen of France, consort of Louis XIV., 45, 49, 52, 70 *seq.*
Marigni, 10
Marlborough, Churchill, Duke of, 201, 217, 218, 222, 224 *seq.*, 229, 232, 235, 239 *seq.*, 242, 249 *seq.*, 255 *seq.*, 258
Marly, Château de, 159, 172, 228, 247, 263 *seq.*
Mars-la-Tour, 72
Marsilly, 68
Martinique, Isle of, 5
Mary of Modena, Queen of England, 100, 165, 198 *seq.*, 304
Massillon, 34
Maubuisson, Abbey of, 103, 200
Maulévrier, 224
Max Emanuel. *See* Elector of Bavaria
Mazarin, Cardinal, 4, 11, 14, 17, 23, 36, 93, 296
Meaux, 105, 134, 142. *See* Bossuet
Ménage, 10
Méré, Chevalier de, 10, 15
Meudon, Château de, 85, 262 *seq.*
Mignard, 16, 171
Miramion, Madame de, 101
Molanus, Abbot, 92
Molière, 10, 41, 53
Molina, Jesuit, 35
Molinism. *See* Probabilism
Molinos, Michel, Spanish mystic, 127 *seq.*, 138
Mons, 110, 112, 249
Monsieur. *See* Orléans, Duc d'
Montaigne, 28
Montargis, 161, 162, 194
Montausier, Duc de, 84
—— Duchesse de, 23
Montchevreuil, Mornay, Marquis de, 20, 21, 60, 75, 86
—— Marquise de, 20, 74
Montespan, Marquis de, 46
—— Athenaïs de Rochechouart, Marquise de, 15, 24, 26, 46 *seq.*, 49 *seq.*, 56 *seq.*, 64 *seq.*, 68, 71, 74, 101, 111 *seq.*, 151, 170, 172
Mornay. *See* Montchevreuil
Moselle, 110, 125
Motteville, Madame de, 23
Munich, 83
Mursay, Château de, 4, 55, 58
Mysticism, 129

Namur, 112, 157 *seq.*, 235, 249
Nantes, Edict of, 91 *seq.*, 106, 119
—— Mademoiselle de, daughter of Louis XIV. and Montespan. *See* Bourbon
Naples, 206, 213, 215, 236, 249
Navailles, Marshal Duc de, 23, 45, 46
—— Suzanne de Baudéau-Neuillan, Duchesse de, 23, 46

Nemours, Mademoiselle de, 24
Netherlands, Spanish, 177, 197, 202, 216, 225, 229, 249
Neuillan, de, commander at Niort, 4
—— Madame de, 6 *seq.*, 12
—— Suzanne de Baudéau-, 4. *See* Navailles
Nicole, 34, 282
Nimeguen, Treaty of, 52, 62, 93
Ninon. *See* Lenclos
Niort, 3 *seq.*, 6, 58
Noailles, Marshal Duc de, 135
—— Duchesse de, 207, 208, 211, 227
—— Comte d'Ayen, Duc de, 169, 181, 183 *seq.*, 118, 257, 271, 302, 303, 310
—— Comtesse d'Ayen, Duchesse de, *née* d'Aubigné, 168, 207
—— Bishop of Châlons, Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal de, 132, 133, 135 *seq.*, 138, 139 *seq.*, 145, 147, 163, 169, 181, 185, 192, 276 *seq.*, 280, 282 *seq.*, 286, 287, 289 *seq.*, 293, 294, 300, 308
Noirmoutier, Duc de, 204
Noris, Cardinal, 34
Normandy, 114

Odescalchi. *See* Innocent XI.
Olier, Abbé, 29
Oliva, general of Jesuits, 29
Orange, 5
Orléans, Chartres, Duc d', Regent of France, 155, 167, 193 *seq.*, 205, 228, 233 *seq.*, 235, 244 *seq.*, 272, 273, 275, 280, 285, 296, 298, 300
—— Chartres, Duchesse d'. *See* Blois, Mademoiselle de
—— Duc d', called "Monsieur," brother of Louis XIV., 76, 155, 171, 179 *seq.*, 193 *seq.*
—— Elisabeth Charlotte of Wittelsbach, Princess of the Palatinate, wife of Monsieur, called "Madame," 60, 82, 84, 93, 103, 110, 151, 155 *seq.*, 163, 166, 171, 175, 182, 194 *seq.*, 198, 200, 203, 205, 219, 223, 242, 251, 272, 275, 278 *seq.*, 294, 299, 303, 307 *seq.*, 310
—— Henriette, Duchesse d', daughter of Charles I., 45, 73, 160
Orléans, Louise d', Duchess of Lorraine, 166
Orry, 213, 221, 226
Oudenarde, battle of, 239 *seq.*

Pamiers, 34
Parabère-Pardailhan, 6
Paris, 7, 12, 17, 29, 62, 68, 120, 133, 135, 138, 145, 168, 170, 173, 189, 205, 233, 240, 247
Parisians, 10, 81, 90, 156
Parlements, 52, 81, 105, 197, 286, 293 *seq.*, 297, 307, 308
Parma, 274 *seq.*
Pascal, Blaise, 36 *seq.*, 129, 145, 309
Paul, Saint, 31, 292
Paule. *See* Vincent de
Pavillon, Bishop, 3, 39, 104
Peace of the Church, so-called, 39, 282
Péllisson, 10
Peter the Great, 305
Petitot, 16
Philip IV., King of Spain, 176
Philip V., King of Spain, 183, 192, 193, 197, 199, 201 *seq.*, 208 *seq.*, 213, 215 *seq.*, 220, 225, 228, 234 *seq.*, 245, 253, 255, 256, 259, 274 *seq.*, 284, 292, 296 *seq.*, 306, 307 *seq.*
Philothea, 29
Pibrac, 7
Piedmont, 92
Plato, 121, 151, 171
Po, river, 91, 201
Poitiers, 3, 11
Poitou, 7, 8, 119
Poland, 87, 182
Polignac, Abbé de, 257
Pontchartrain, 180, 185 *seq.*, 243, 248, 287, 297
Port-Royal, Monastery of, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 39, 41, 92, 100, 104, 153, 282, 287, 289 *seq.*, 309, 311
Porto-Carrero, Cardinal, 178, 202, 205 *seq.*, 213, 220
Portugal, 192, 222
Primi Visconti, 68
Probabilism, 34 *seq.*
Protestantism, 91, 92, 106 *seq.*, 142, 222, 286
Provence, 68
Provinciales, Lettres dites, 37 *seq.*

Prussia, 192
Pyrenees, 57, 182

QUESNEL, Pasquier, father of the Oratory, 280 *seq.*, 282 *seq.*, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293
Quietism, 127 *seq.*, 133 *seq.*, 145, 146, 187, 280
Quixote, Don, 12, 210

RACINE, Jean, 33, 41, 99 *seq.*, 152 *seq.*, 168
Rambouillet, Hôtel de, 10
Ramillies, battle of, 232
Rancé, Le Boutillier, Abbé de, 29, 200
Rastadt, Congress of, 260 *seq.*
Ratisbon, 107, 222
Réaux. *See* Tallemant
Retz, Pierre de Gondy, Cardinal de, 9, 15, 36
Rhine, 91, 110, 158, 215, 217, 222, 225, 236
Richelieu, Cardinal de, 4, 32, 93, 160
—— Duc de, 20, 21
—— Duchesse de, 17, 44, 71, 83
—— Hôtel de, 24, 48
Rigault, 165
Rochechouart, Duc de Mortemart, 15
—— *See* Montespan
Rochefoucauld, Duc de la, author of the *Maximes*, 33, 50
—— Duc de la, 72
—— Prince de la, godfather of Françoise d'Aubigné, 4
Rohan, Cardinal de, 300
Rollin, 34
Rome, 9, 32, 80, 92, 103 *seq.*, 127, 139, 143, 145, 146, 178, 185, 187, 205 *seq.*, 210, 253, 276, 279, 283, 307, 308
Rousseau, J. J., 265, 274, 310
Rue neuve Saint-Louis, 14
—— Saint-Jacques, 8, 12
Ryswyck, Treaty of, 159, 160, 166, 176, 201

Saint-Cloud, Château de, 73, 194
Saint-Cyr, called Institut de Saint Louis, 3, 97 *seq.*, 111, 112, 114, 123 *seq.*, 130 *seq.*, 140, 164, 168, 261, 301 *seq.*
Saint-Cyran, Duvergier de Hauranne, Abbé de, 31 *seq.*, 35, 38, 283, 287
Saint-Evremond, 10, 19
Saint-Germain, Château de, 49, 78, 108, 109, 199
—— Faubourg, 48
Saint-Herman, Mademoiselle de, 8
—— P. Tiraqueau, Baron de, 8
Saintonge, 2, 119
Saint-Pierre, Abbé de, 265
Saint-Simon, Duc de, father of the author, 57
—— Louis de Rouvray, Duc de, 20, 21, 34, 57, 75, 88, 89, 110, 117, 120, 122, 129, 156, 157 *seq.*, 159, 170, 174 *seq.*, 195, 199, 200, 209, 219, 224, 229, 238, 245 *seq.*, 263, 273, 286, 288, 290 *seq.*, 292, 303, 308
Saint-Sulpice, Séminaire de, 44, 119, 131, 132, 283, 288
Sales. *See* François de
Scarron, Françoise d'Aubigné, Madame, 12 *seq.*, 18 *seq.*, 42 *seq.*, 53, 55. *See* Aubigné, Maintenon
—— Paul, 8 *seq.*, 13 *seq.*, 22, 69, 177, 268
Sceaux, Château de, 177, 183
Scudéry, Mademoiselle de, 10, 16, 69
Segrais, 10, 16, 18
Seignelay, Marquis de, son of Colbert, 109
Seine, 80
Sévigné, Marquise de, 17, 29, 50, 51, 54, 55, 63, 68, 101
Sophia. *See* Electress
Sorbier, 16
Sorbonne, 35, 36, 284, 293, 309
Soubise, Princesse de, 49
Spanheim, Ezechiel, 94, 172
Spanish Succession, 144 *seq.*
Spinola, Bishop, 92
St. Christopher, Isle of, 5
Steenkerk, battle of, 115
Strasburg, 61, 72, 91, 105, 159, 249
Stuart dynasty, 92, 106, 276
Sweden, 107

TACITUS, 171
Tallard, Marshal, 179, 225, 297
Tallemant des Réaux, 16, 18 *seq.*, 54

Talon, Denis, 105
Tartuffe, 41, 53
Tassy, Félix de, 90
Télémaque, 121, 123, 149 *seq.*, 174
Tessé, Marshal, 224, 227, 234, 236
Theresa, Saint, letters of, 45
Tillemont, Le Nain de, 33, 282
Torcy, Marquis de, Colbert's son, 109, 179 *seq.*, 194, 198 *seq.*, 201, 206 *seq.*, 211, 220 *seq.*, 228, 248, 249, 250, 253 *seq.*, 257, 258, 260, 287
Toulon, 221, 227, 234, 236
Toulouse, Comte de, 59, 111, 154, 227, 297, 306
—— town of, 226 *seq.*
Tournay, 53
Treves, 110
Trianon, 172, 192
Troyes, Hôtel de, 8, 11
Turin, 163, 206, 208, 210, 219, 223, 232 *seq.*, 251
Turks, 5, 86, 106, 192, 199
Tyrol, 222, 232

UNIGENITUS, papal bull, 291 *seq.*, 300, 308
Ursins (Orsini), Anne Marie de la Trémoille, Princesse de Talleyrand-Chalais, Duchess of Bracciano, commonly called Princesse des, 204 *seq.*, 210 *seq.*, 213, 220 *seq.*, 225 *seq.*, 232 *seq.*, 241, 244 *seq.*, 250, 252 *seq.*, 256 *seq.*, 270, 274 *seq.*, 284, 303, 304
Ursuline Nuns, 6, 8
Utrecht, Treaty of, 258 *seq.*, 274, 296

VAIR, du, 28
Valenciennes, 91, 236, 249
Vauban, Marshal, 52, 93, 112, 190 *seq.*, 233, 238
Vaudemont, Prince de, 158 *seq.*
Vaugirard, rue de, 48, 50
Vaux, Château de, 18
Vendôme, Marshal Duc de, 187, 201, 215, 219, 222, 229, 232, 235, 239 *seq.*, 241 *seq.*, 244, 256 *seq.*, 274, 280, 298
Venetian Republic, 165
Ventadour, Duchesse de, 195, 196
Verdun, 72
Vermandois, Comte de, 85
Versailles, 72, 78 *seq.*, 88, 262 *seq.*
Vertot, Abbé de, 310
Victor Amadeo II., Duke of Savoy, 160, 161, 192, 202, 213, 223, 224 *seq.*, 233, 236, 255, 259
Vienna, 160, 220, 222
Vigo, 221
Villarceaux, Marquis de, 15, 19 *seq.*, 45, 68
—— Marquise de, 45
Villars, father of Marshal, 218
—— Marshal, 201, 218, 222, 229, 236, 250, 254 *seq.*, 258, 259 *seq.*, 297
Villeroy, Marshal Duc de, 72, 158 *seq.*, 187, 215, 219, 225, 229, 232 *seq.*, 253, 254, 261, 297, 299, 304
—— Duc de, son of Marshal, 167, 186
Villette, Monsieur de, 4, 22, 51
—— Madame de, *née* d'Aubigné, 4, 6, 8, 22, 51
—— Comte de, 51, 58, 95, 233
—— Mademoiselle de. *See* Caylus
Vincennes, Château de, 32, 142, 299
Vincent de Paul, Saint, 30, 309
Voisin, La, 63 *seq.*
Voltaire, 34, 94, 178, 293
Voysin, Secrétaire d'Etat, 186, 250 *seq.*, 260, 296, 297

WALDENSES, 92
Wales, Prince of, 106, 188, 199
West Indies, 5, 9
William III., Prince of Orange, 106 *seq.*, 112, 114, 151, 157, 158, 166, 176 *seq.*, 192, 197 *seq.*, 200 *seq.*
Wittelsbach, dynasty of, 83, 176

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